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THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

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EDITORIAL NOTES

THE QUESTION OF TALKS AND COMPROMISE

The year 1985 was a year in which the struggle of our people for liberation from the apartheid oppression reached unprecedented hights. Day after day, week after week, the flame of resistance ascended into the sky, scorching the territory of the white supremacists and searing the conscience of the world. How was it possible, everybody wondered, for the momentum of struggle to be sustained and even intensified? How could the enemy withstand the repeated shocks that were being administered to him? What would be the outcome of this titanic conflict? Could we afford the cost of victory?

One thing has been made abundantly clear by the events of 1985 and that is that the South African revolution is not the brainchild of 'agitators' and 'terrorists', as the various Bothas claim, but is the inevitable outcome of social contradictions which cannot be hidden and which have reached a crisis point demanding resolution. In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels pointed out how, when in feudal society the relations of property were no longer compatible with the developed productive forces, "they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder". Now this time of revolutionary change has come to South Africa. The old apartheid order is no longer compatible with the demands of society. The apartheid laws and institutions have become so many fetters holding back the progress of the majority of the population in the interest of preserving the privilege of the white minority. It is instructive to refer once again to the programme of the South African Communist Party *TheRoad to South African Freedom* adopted in 1962 which stated:

> "The deep-rooted crisis in South Africa cannot be resolved by the Nationalist government, using methods of force and violence or attempting to deceive home and world opinion with fraudulent schemes of 'Bantu self-government'. Nor can it be resolved by a mere change of superficial concessions while leaving the essence of the colonial system and monopoly control intact. The crisis springs from the fundamental contradictions of South African society . . . This crisis can only be resolved by a revolutionary change in the social system which will overcome these conflicts by putting an end to the colonial oppression of the African and other non-White people. . . The main content of this revolution is the national liberation of the African people."

In the 24 years since that programme was adopted the parameters have scarcely altered and the contemporary scene is marked by the intensification of the social conflict flowing from the fact that, despite all the Bothas' talk of "reform" and "change", nothing has changed and the basic contradiction remains. The black majority are still deprived of their rights; all power remains in the hands of the white minority; the ownership of the means of production is concentrated in the hands of a small but increasingly powerful group of monopolists while the masses go hungry.

For all this, 1986 is not 1962. Though nothing of the essential South Africa has changed, the mechanism of change has been set in motion, the main component of which lies in the state of consciousness of the people. The events of 1985 make it clear that the patience of the overwhelming majoirity of the people of South Africa has come to an end and they are now acting in the spirit of the 1961 manifesto of Umkhonto we Sizwe, which stated:

> "The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom".

When Nelson Mandela went underground in 1961 he issued a statement putting the alternatives before the people and stressing:

> "I shall fight the Government side by side with you, inch by inch, and mile by mile, until victory is won. The struggle is my life. I will continue fighting for freedom until the end of my days".

The spirit of Mandela now burns in the breast of the youth of South Africa. They are fighting inch by inch, mile by mile for freedom because the struggle has become their life and they will continue fighting until the end of their days. It is no use trying to tempt them with Bantu Education and the jobs and salaries of boss boys or managers; it is no use offering them trips and scholarships to the United States or Western Europe. They don't want gifts and favours, they want freedom, and nothing is going to distract them. Yes, there may be traitors and weaklings, and some may fall by the wayside. But we are talking of a national phenomenon, not the idiosyncracies of a few individuals. The people have decided to fight, and they will continue fighting until victory is won.

Courage and Determination

There is no other explanation for the extraordinary courage and determination which has been displayed by the youth in the recent period. By their actions they are proclaiming, not merely their identification with Mandela as a leader, but their support for the ANC as an organisation, whose colours, slogans and songs they place at the centre of their activities, whose policies they clearly endorse, and in whose ranks they silently enrol themselves. It is the hallmark of a national liberatory organisation that it both shapes and embodies the consciousness of the nation. The ANC fulfils this role in South Africa, and its eminence is today acknowledged by friend and foe at home and abroad.

Testimony to the achievement of the liberation movement is provided by the fact that nobody today, apart from a handful of ultra-left sectarians, dares challenge the credentials or content of the Freedom Charter. Even President Botha attempts to dress the hideous carcass of his apartheid offspring in the clothing of the Charter. Addressing the Cape Nationalist Party congress in Port Elizabeth last September he said:

> "I advocate on behalf of the Government reform because it is the philosophy of

the National Party since its founding. We are the party of reform. We are the party of freedom. We are the party of liberty. We are the party of hope in South Africa".

Time was when the Nationalist Party openly asked for support for the policy of apartheid and came to power in 1948 on the promise that it would preserve white domination for ever. Not any more. The very word apartheid is today disowned by its practitioners, and Botha's claim that he is working for reform is in itself an admission that the system over which he presides is immoral. The list of changes for which he claimed credit is not very long:

1. The new constitution establishing separate chambers for Whites, Coloureds and Indians (but excluding the African majority).
2. The repeal of the Mixed Marriages Act and section 16 of the Immorality Act. Repeal of the Act banning mixed political parties.
3. The scrapping of the provincial system and the establishment of regional services councils.
4. Changes in labour legislation.
5. The right of property ownership plus the establishment of a Southern African Development Bank and support for the Small Business Development Corporation.
6. The establishment of a common citizenship for all South Africans.

The fact that what Botha calls "unrest" or "terrorism" has risen to a peak precisely since these so-called "reforms" were introduced is proof enough that Botha's offerings are unacceptable to the people. It is all very well for Botha to trumpet: "My party and my government are committed to the principle of a united South Africa with one citizenship and universal franchise," when the words which follow show that he is committed to nothing of the sort — "but within the structures chosen by South Africans . . . Naturally, the principle of a united South Africa includes the reality and the desirability of territorial and border divisions within South Africa, such as, for example, provincial borders for purposes of provincial government, and own territory for each of the self-governing states, and jurisdiction areas for systems of local and regional authorities, also in urban areas". Naturally. Apartheid is dead. Long live "structures" and "divisions".

In other words, the essential elements of discrimination will remain — the Population Registration and Group Areas Acts, the bantustans, the segregation and oppression which make life a hell for blacks. No doubt Botha or his successors will come forward during the 1986 session of Parliament with further "reforms" but they will prove equally inadequate. Not until the basic contradiction of South African society has been eliminated, not until a system has been established in which neither advantage nor disadvantage can accrue from the accident of birth, race or colour, will the people desist from struggle. President Tambo's definition of "democracy" is totally different from Botha's, and not all the latter's juggling with words can deceive the people.

Interventions

Nevertheless, such is the momentum which has been generated by our revolutionary struggle that all manner of interventions are being made by parties of one sort or another anxious to stave off the final collapse and persuade the ANC to compromise. Delegations from big business and the Progressive Federal Party have flown to Lusaka and conferred with the ANC leadership. Delegations of Afrikaner students and dominees have tried to follow suit but have been prevented by ministerial action. The press ban on the ANC is being increasingly challenged. While all these interventions are to be welcomed, for the ANC has always said it is willing and ready to talk to anybody, the motives of the intermediaries should not be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

None of those seeking audience of the ANC support the principle of one man one vote in a democratic, unitary South Africa. The PFP, for example, joined with Inkatha and representatives of other liberal groups and individuals to establish a so-called Convention Alliance (later called the National Convention Movement) whose aim, in the words of PFP leader Van Zyl Slabbert is:

> "To bring about by non-violent means and in the shortest time possible the complete dismantling of apartheid and the negotiation through a National Convention of one constitution based on one citizenship in one country".

This is as vague as President Botha's "united South Africa with one citizenship and universal franchise". In Botha's case the formula is a cloak for apartheid and discrimination. In the PFP's case the formula is a cloak for continued denial of equality through federalism and regionalism. As for the businessmen, they have no programme for genuine reform, only measures for the avoidance of revolution and the perpetuation of capitalism.

However, while we have a duty to keep our political line clear in the face of all blandishments, we should nevertheless be ready to welcome all desertions from the enemy camp. The mere fact that these groups and individuals — some of them with real power and influence in the land — are wanting to talk to the ANC is a sign they are convinced Botha's road leads to ruin. The more we can bring about divisions in the enemy camp and isolate the Botha regime from its natural allies the better. But we stick to our guns,not because we idealise violence, nor out of obstinacy, but because we firmly believe there can be no peace until apartheid is totally destroyed, and we see no way of achieving this objective without mobilising the masses for the seizure of power by force. The businessmen, PFP, Inkatha etc. are full of ideals of greater or lesser significance, but none has given a hint as to how the changes they advocate are to be brought about. They have no plan of campaign, no strategy and tactics. They offer us a half-baked pie in the sky but no rockets to get us there.

The Convention Alliance or Movement may lure some people from the path of struggle because it appears to offer an alternative to violence. Those appalled by the scale of violence which has marred our country and demanded so many sacrifices in the recent period are mistaken, however, if they think the Alliance shows the way out of the impasse. Lacking the participation of either of the main protagonists, the Alliance road in fact leads to a dead end. It can only succeed if one side or the other surrenders.

The ANC has made it abundantly clear that it has no intention of abandoning the armed struggle until its objectives have been achieved, and that there is no point in taking part in a National Convention until the power of the regime has been broken. To change course now would be to admit defeat, to demobilise our army before victory has been won, leaving the enemy in possession of the field. This would mean that the sacrifices of the men, women and children who have given their lives to bring about real change would have been in vain. It would also mean that the prospects of mobilising the people for further struggle would be dissipated; we would have no weapon left except deputations, petitions and pleas for mercy.

The criminal behaviour of the regime both before and during the state of emergency, the cold-blooded savagery displayed by the police and military, the heartless murder of Benjamin Moloise, make it clear that the responsibility for violence in South Africa rests not with the people but with their oppressors. The denial of franchise rights means that the majority of the population have been governed by force and violence ever since the colonial system was installed. The tens of thousands of lashes inflicted by the courts every year on the backs of our people are a symbol of this violence. Now that we are fighting back, the enemy calls us "terrorists", "men of violence", when it is he and his broeders who have held the whip in their hands all these centuries. The urgent imperative for the liberation movement is to fight harder, not less, so that the terrible violence to which our people are subjected can be brought to an end once and for all.

We are making progress, the struggle is mounting. A security policeman testifying in a court case in Johannesburg last October said that incidents of "terrorism" — by which he meant the operations of Umkhonto we Sizwe — were on the increase all over the country and there had been 99 cases reported between October 1984 and September 1985 compared with a total of 55 the previous year. (*Star* 23.10.1985) In the ghetto areas and townships the people are on the march, daily defying the might of the enemy. The regime is shaken to its foundations, its allies frightened and confused, its overseas backers on the defensive. This is not the time, when the immovable object at last is being moved, to pause and ponder. This is a time to increase the pressure on all fronts and make our force truly irresistible. Only through final victory and the conquest of power by the people can the conditions be created for the implementation of the provisions of the Freedom Charter.

NEW PROGRAMME OF THE CPSU

The 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which is to take place in February 1986 will be an event of vital importance not only for the people of the Soviet Union but for all humanity. It is not too much to say that the hopes of the majority of the world's peoples are centred on the Soviet Union not only because of the example she sets but also for the strength she generates and the solidarity she displayes in the fight for socialism and peace. It is thus a matter of no small consequence that the CPSU last October published a new draft programme for discussion nationwide prior to its adoption by the Congress in February. The attention of the world will be focussed on this programme both before and after its adoption because it sets out the perspectives of the Soviet Party and people up to the turn of the century.

No programme of a similar kind is produced in the capitalist world because capitalism is based on competition not co-operation, and planning is impossible between competitors whose motto is: "Each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost". One capitalist's meat is another's poison; one millionaire's success is founded on the failure of a thousand rivals. Capitalist budgets are drafted in secret and sprung on an astounded nation which has had no hand in deciding what the priorities of public spending should be. In the socialist countries, on the other hand, all proposals are discussed in the minutest detail on the widest possible scale before they are adopted so that the people are enabled to share in the shaping of their society and to feel that they are masters of their destiny.

The first priority of the socialist world is peace, and the CPSU draft programme places this in the centre of the stage. Peace was on the banner of the Bolsheviks when they carried through the 1917 revolution, and all the efforts of the Soviet Union since 1917 have been directed towards the elimination of centres and causes of aggression and the maintenance of peaceful relations with all states irrespective of their social system. It is a lie peddled by anti-Communists and counter-revolutionaries that the Soviet Union has aimed at establishing communism world-wide by means of military conquest. From the outset Lenin and the other Bolshevik leaders stressed that revolution was not for export, and the Soviet Union has never committed any act of aggression aimed at installing a communist government in power. The draft programme stresses that the threat of war comes not from the socialist countries, who have nothing to gain from it, but from international capitalism, which plunders the weak and seeks military domination to ensure that the pillage continues.

It is in the capitalist world that the division between the classes, between the rich and the poor, between the haves and the have-nots among the nations, has widened. In the socialist world the formerly backward peoples have been advanced, the polarity between rich and poor has been eliminated, together with slums, unemployment, discrimination and deprivation. There are no privileged and no disadvantaged *classes* or *nations* in the socialist world, no people profiting from the exploitation of the labour of others, because private ownership of the means of production and distribution has been abolished, and nobody is able or has the incentive to gain at the expense of his neighbour. Above all under socialism there are no manufacturers of armaments who profit from the exacerbation of tension and the threat or actuality of war. Nobody stands to gain from foreign conquest. As Fidel Castro said in one of his speeches:

> "How can the Soviet Union be labelled imperialist? Where are its monopoly corporations? Where is its participation in multinational companies? What factories, what mines, what oil fields does it own in the underdeveloped world? What worker is exploited in any country of Asia, Africa and Latin America by Soviet capital? Soviet economic co-operation with Cuba and many other countries is based not on the sweat and sacrifices of exploited workers of other countries, but on the labour and efforts of the Soviet people."

All the Soviet Union has asked from the world since 1917 has been peace so that it can get on with the job of building socialism and improving the living standards of its people. But peace is precisely what the capitalist world has consistently tried to deny to the Soviet Union, fearing that socialist successes would totally destabilise the capitalist system in the rest of the world. The capitalist powers first tried to kill the Bolshevik baby in its cradle by outright intervention. When this failed they helped build up the Nazi war machine hoping to turn it against the Soviet Union, and during the second world war delayed the opening of the second front until the last possible moment. In the post-war period they invented the myth of "Soviet aggression" to justify their cold war policies of isolation and boycott designed to hold back the development of the socialist world.

The pressures to which the Soviet Union was subjected during this unremitting siege by the forces of imperialism and counter-revolution were not without effect, and the draft programme acknowledges distortions and deviations which hampered economic and social progress. But the strength of the socialist system has enabled the Soviet Union to triumph over the ravages of famine and war, and today the Soviet people prepare for great advances on all fronts by the year 2000.

The draft programme calls for a drastic improvement in the style of work if living standards are to be increased. It is envisaged that production will be doubled in the next 15 years, largely due to the introduction of new technology and an increase in productivity of between 130 and 150 per cent. Working hours will be shortened, real incomes will rise steadily, social services will be extended, the quality of housing and goods will be improved. There will be strict adherence to the Leninist style of work — those in authority will be made more accountable, machinery will be evolved to ensure greater participation by the people in decision-making and administration at all levels.

The implementation of the Soviet programme is a matter of concern not only to the Soviet people but to all those throughout the world engaged in the struggle for peace and social progress. It was the 1917 revolution which made the first break in the capitalist iron curtain, and it was the development of Soviet power which opened the way for the surge to independence of colony after colony following the defeat of fascism in the last war. Today the capitalist countries remain the last bastions of plunder and exploitation in the world; but, says the Soviet programme, though capitalism is "past its peak", it is none the less dangerous for that. The capitalist countries are still practitioners of imperialism, still determined to undermine the forces of communism and social transformation in every country, threatening in their desperation to unleash a nuclear war "in which there would be no winners or losers but in which world civilisation would perish."

The fight against imperialism and for peace is vital for all humanity, and the programme stresses that the possibilities of preserving the peace are real if the forces capable of defeating imperialism are mobilised and unified in action — the socialist countries, the majority of developing countries and the anti-war movements in the capitalist countries. We in South Africa fighting for the creation of a unitary, non-racial and democratic state must recognise that our struggle is interlinked with that of the Soviet people to achieve peace abroad and social progress at home. Their victories are our victories, and vice versa. It is in our own interests that we do what we can to support the Soviet people in the implementation of their programme.

MEMORIAL TO YUSUF DADOO

The tombstone of the late chairman of the South African Communist Party, Dr Yusuf Dadoo, was unveiled at a ceremony in Highgate Cemetery, London, on September 19, 1985. The wording on the stone reads:

Dr Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo
1909 - 1983
Chairman of the South African
Communist Party
He dedicated his life to the cause
of national liberation, socialism
and world peace.

The ceremony was attended by comrade Yusuf's widow, Winnie, and daughters Roshan and Shireen, together with a large number of South African comrades and friends including members of the SACP and ANC. Also present were the Vietnamese and GDR Ambassadors, the Soviet Charge d'Affaires, diplomatic representatives of other socialist countries, and representatives of trade unions and other progressive organisations in the United Kingdom.

Speakers were Alfred Nzo, secretary general of the ANC, Joe Slovo, on behalf of the SACP Central Committee, and Aziz Pahad, elected to the ANC executive at the consultative conference in Zambia last June.

Commenting on the fact that Yusuf Dadoo's grave is in the vicinity of that of Karl Marx, who had died 100 years earlier in 1883, Alfred Nzo said:

"Thus both space and time have converged in the body and ideas of the two men, signifying community of devotion, dedication and service to the cause of liberation of Man.

"There is another dimension of political unity we should mention when we talk of men like Dadoo: and that is the revolutionary alliance of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party. Dadoo's name, like those of his colleagues Malume (Moses Kotane) and J. B. (Marks), will forever be remembered for the strength of unity they brought to these two organisations.

"The secret of our excellent relations with the SACP is because we have always had men like Dadoo, we have always regarded each other as soldiers in a common battle against apartheid colonialism. We have always respected each other's political role, each other's weapons against the common enemy. And it has been during this process of common struggle that we have forged common strategies and tactics of struggle, in mass political actions and armed struggle.

"We have never tried to impose any policy on each other. Nay, we have imposed only one policy on each other: and that is the policy of absolute mutual respect. Communists and non-Communists in our revolution have always reinforced one another's determination and revolutionary commitment".

In his speech Joe Slovo said that during his close on 50 years of political activity, Yusuf Dadoo had shown himself to be not only the greatest leader of the South African Indian community since Gandhi, but a national leader of all the black oppressed.

"He never bought his national popularity at the expense of hiding the very driving force of his political life, which was a devotion to internationalism, to socialism, to communism as the ultimate foundation for true freedom and liberation.

"Yusuf was above all a communist, and this devotion informed everything he did as a revolutionary nationalist".

Pointing to the revolutionary upsurge of the oppressed people in South Africa, Joe Slovo said comrade Yusuf had seen all this in his mind's eye before he died.

"How his face would have lit up at the sight, for example, of the Party's red flag and banner draping the coffins of some of those recently massacred in Cradock".

In his farewell message from his hospital bed Yusuf Dadoo had expressed his confidence in the black working class as the backbone of the liberation struggle. Now, said Joe Slovo, workers were everywhere on the march.

"Change is in the air. We are at a stage in our history in which each day is something like a year. Botha and his gang are splashing about, trying desperately to cling to white domination through a variety of so-called power-sharing formulas. It is, comrades, a moment of great promise, but it is also a moment of great danger. For behind the national issues which frame the present conflict there are vital questions, both local and international, relating to class and ideology.

"In this challenging situation Yusuf's legacy must be preserved and enriched. The link which he emphasised throughout his life between national liberation and social emancipation has never been more relevant than it is today".

Yusuf Dadoo, said Aziz Pahad, was a revolutionary who had performed outstanding tasks and won a permanent place in the hearts not only of the South African people but of progressive and democratic forces throughout the world.

"Let me say that Doc's greatest contribution to me, as a member of the Indian community, was an understanding that my struggle as an Indian could not be separated from the struggle for the liberation of the entire country. Doc gave this firm message that those who find themselves inside South Africa, irrespective of cultural or other differences, are South Africans and in the end we must build a national consciousness from which will arise one nation.

"Doc's message that 'it is better to die fighting for a righteous cause than to live as helots' is today reverberating throughout the ghettoes of our country".

DEATH OF FLORENCE MOPHOSHO

When comrade Florence Mophosho died on South African Women's Day — August 9, 1985 — the liberation movement lost one of its most dedicated and able fighters.

Comrade Florence was born in Alexandra Township, left school in Standard Six in order to help her mother bring up two younger children, and worked first as a domestic servant and later in a factory.

She joined the ANC in 1952 during the defiance campaign,helped in preparations for the Congress of the People and became a full-time organiser for the ANC.

It was the time when the apartheid regime was threatening to extend passes to African women and it was against the extension of the pass laws that Florence devoted her considerable energy at this time, particularly in Alexandra where she lived at first. She played a key role in the demonstration of Transvaal women against the pass laws which took place in 1955 and also in the national demonstration which took place in Pretoria on August 9, 1956. She was one of the 20,000 women present on that historic occasion.

She also organised domestic workers, the vast majority of whom were women. She was a member of the Alexandra Bus Boycott Committee which organised the boycott of 1957. During the state of emergency in 1960 she evaded arrest and continued her work underground.

She was instructed to leave South Africa and was the first ANC representative appointed to work at the Women's International Democratic Federation with headquarters in Berlin. On her return to Africa after more than four years she was appointed head of the ANC Women's Section. She attended the Morogoro conference in 1969. In 1975 she was elected to the National Executive Committee of the ANC and again at the consultative conference in June, 1985, though she was not able to attend this conference because of her ill health. Her contribution to the struggle for national liberation and social emancipation is acknowledged by all, particularly her efforts to clarify the position of women in the struggle and gain the acknowledgment of the vital role that women have played and must continue to play in ever-increasing numbers if freedom is to be won and secured.

Hamba kahle, comrade Florence!

§§

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all.

Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

§§

THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH IN OUR LIBERATION STRUGGLE

By Thoko Mdlalose

A well-known statement by Karl Marx that "religion is the opium of the people" encapsulates the Marxist view of religion. Very often it is misconstrued and inappropriately used. It has largely been interpreted to mean that religion is simply a tool to enslave and stupefy the people; that it is nothing more than a device of subjugation in the hand of the oppressor class. Such an interpretation, if left unexplained, can be dangerous even for revolutionaries, who have the task, as Marx pointed out, not only of interpreting the world, but also changing it.

It is often forgotten that Marx went further to write that religion is "the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world, the soul of the soulless conditions". (K. Marx, F. Engels, *Coll. Works, Vol3 p. 175*). This is the dimension that is usually forgotten. Marx was quite aware that religion is the expression of people's frustration against the seemingly unknowable 'mysteries' of the universe and the seemingly insurmountable natural and social obstacles. He was aware that religion is an "expression of real distress and also the protest against real distress". From this standpoint we can draw the conclusion that the main objective base for religion to thrive is national and class oppression and conflict. People rely on religion as a vehicle in order to meet important human needs, to satisfy or pacify emotions, imaginations, fears, love, etc. However, what is true is that religion is not capable of going down to the root of those needs.

This however, should not be understood to mean that once class society goes, religion goes with it. This alone is not a sufficient condition for the withering away of religion. Religion is also a product of society's attempt to understand and conquer nature. It is the product of man's ignorance about the physical world around him. Marx wrote:

> "The religious reflex of the world can ...only then finally vanish when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellowmen and to Nature". (K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1. p.79).

So religious consciousness is likely to continue to lurk in the background of human society for a long time to come. There is a tendency for subjective factors to outlive their objective base, often by incredibly long periods of time. Since the overwhelming majority of Christians in our country comprise the mass of the working people, the issue of religion becomes an important question in the work of all revolutionaries. We need to realise that, in our country, the majority of those who will participate in the final overthrow of the apartheid colonial regime are church-goers. Neglect of this factor and the failure to take into account the subtleties of the mechanisms which shape social and class consciousness may reduce the effectiveness of our vanguard role amongst the masses, and lose us sections of the potential fighting force. There is always a danger of considering that what is obsolete to us is also obsolete to the masses. We should, at all times, go to where the masses are.

Christianity and working-class consciousness

Christianity is a contradictory phenomenon. It demands a dialectical approach. At the level of practical understanding, we can say that Christianity is a set of practices within or without particular established organisations and institutions which espouse the Christian belief. Within themselves these institutions reflect the historic contradictions in the development of society and socio-political conflicts in each particular society.

Christianity as a form of social consciousness has its own imprint on the consciousness of the working class. Because of the fact that in no society does the working class appear ready-made, this imprint is also a historical factor. The development of the working class follows a zig-zag road together with its people, strata and other classes in that society. The emergence and the development of the consciousness of the working class are the product of the multiplicity of factors derived from the historic, economic, social and cultural conditions obtaining at each given stage of development. Working-class consciousness, like all other class consciousness, is also shaped by its relationship with other forms of social consciousness.

A number of elements can be identified within a class consciousness e.g. ideals, values, stereotypes, emotions, moods, etc. At different historical periods of its development, working-class consciousness may be characterised by different combinations of the above-mentioned factors. So at various periods the characterisation may be either because of rational or emotional elements exercising a dominant influence on the working-class consciousness. Depending on what the dominant elements are at each given period, the working-class consciousness assumes greater or lesser homogeneity. This determines whether the working class becomes more or less capable of identifying itself as a social entity with common interests. It also determines to what extent the working-class consciousness relates to the conditions of other classes and sectors in society.

Christians have a vision of heavenly paradise whereas we have a vision of man's future on earth. Christians have a spiritual view of the world. To them God is a supernatural power, the overall Creator, with ultimate powers over everybody and everything. We have a materialistic view of the world which denies that man was created by God. We contend that people's ideas, like all other aspects of their behaviour, are the products of material causes and can only be properly understood when these causes are discovered. We hold that man developed through a long process of evolution and his ideas are the product of the mental activity of his brain — itself a highly developed and complex form of matter. Christians see social life primarily in moral categories; i.e. good and evil, love and hate, poor and rich, generosity and greed, etc. We don't reject moral values but we regard them as an unsound framework for scientific analysis and an unreliable guide to effective action for changing the world.

A Christian can argue that apartheid is the result of "ill-will" or "evil intentions" of the white people who are greedy. So a black worker in his prayer might actually be heard saying, 'Almighty, why are black people so blessed?' On the other hand a white worker praises God for 'placing' him in the position of the oppressor over the black people. Dr Malan is on record as having said that differences between white and black 'are permanent and not man-made'. (*Moses Kotane*, p.183) Malan was actually ascribing the 'difference' to some spiritual force above society. Revolutionaries, on the other hand, know that the real reason for apartheid is to be found in the material system of capitalist exploitation which makes apartheid highly profitable for financial investors. The real root is not to be found in the white man's head. For this purpose, it is necessary to see society in class terms: workers and employers, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Even colonial oppression can best be understood if explained on the basis of class domination.

Private Or Social?

It is often argued that religion 'is a private affair between God and the individual'. Christianity emphasises this 'direct link' and 'communication' between God and the individual. On the other hand, every wage-worker is to a certain extent a 'class individual', someone distinct from the social consciousness of his class. This tendency pushes him towards trying to solve his problems as an individual. Sometimes such a worker might feel that a collective approach, (e.g. through his trade union) is a threat to his 'individual strategy' and self-expression. Such a worker is likely to believe that his social self-realisation takes place outside the productive relations — in his non-working time or even his prayer-time. The worker caught up in this illusion might hardly realise that his approach increases his dependence on the capitalist labour system.This 'individual strategy' (under the threat of loss of job) militates against the collective strategy (e.g. of the trade union) and most dangerously, against building working class strength.

The influence of Christianity on the outlook and the consciousness of the working class is important. It is a superimposition on the habitual forms in which the everyday consciousness of the masses is manifested, so that after being repeated a million times, it becomes firmly established. Sometimes, regardless of class experience, this influence continues to regulate individual human behaviour, exerting an influence on the mode in which new knowledge and experience is assimilated from immediate everyday practice. This reality tends to complicate the work of revolutionary organisations and trade unions in shaping the consciousness of the working class. When working out the proletariat's scientific ideology,revolutionaries must reckon with the fact that such forms of social consciousness exist. The homogeneity of the working class is important in ensuring a formidable struggle against capital. This homogeneity is expressed primarily in the content of the working-class consciousness.

Historical experience has confirmed that the developed class consciousness of a class "for itself" can only be acquired by the working class through the teachings of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, blended with the experience of the struggle of the working masses themselves. This level of development means that the broad masses of the working class are aware of the conditions of their existence in capitalist society, their relations to other classes and strata, and their strategic mission in digging the grave of the capitalist system. One of the basic elements enabling the working class to attain this level of consciousness is the role of trade unions. The worker's participation in trade union activity leads him to the conviction that his living conditions are regulated mainly by social, economic and political factors. He then begins to realise that in order to influence this condition, collective action is essential. It is only by passing through the crucible of collective struggle that a worker can attain the objective understanding of the divergent interests of the individual, class and society.

Having realised that the majority of the working masses in our country are Christians, revolutionaries should then look for ways and means of involving the Church in the national liberation struggle in general and the working-class struggle in particular. This involvement has become particularly important because the Church is also being used as a primary launching base for imperialist anti-communist propaganda.

The search for a meaningful role

The role that the church can play in our liberation struggle is a very important one. This role is enhanced by the following factors:

Firstly, the practical involvement of the Christian community in the everyday struggle of the oppressed majority has made them realise that the Church has not been addressing the real issues which cause social conflicts. Recently a cross-section of Church leaders met and considered the position of the Church in relation to the crisis situation which has gripped our country. The product of that meeting was 'The Kairos Document',which says this on the challenge to the Church:

> "It is not possible to make valid moral judgements about a society without first understanding that society. The analysis of Apartheid that underpins 'Church Theology' is simply inadequate. The present crisis has now made it very clear that the efforts of Church leaders to promote effective and practical ways of changing our society have failed".

Secondly,the role of the Church is enhanced by the character and the nature of our national liberation struggle as set out in the Strategy and Tactics of the vanguard movement in the liberation alliance and the Freedom Charter. Lenin was describing a struggle like ours when he said:

> "... a national movement is one which expresses the objective needs of the whole country, and aims its heaviest blows at the central forces of the enemy opposing the country's development. A national movement is one which has the sympathy of the vast majority of the population". (Lenin, *Coll. Works,* Vol. 18, p.472).

A third factor is the wind of social and intellectual change which is blowing internationally. Fourthly, one must take note of the important contradictions and transformations taking place within the Church itself. Lastly, there is now general recognition that the regime is the most reactionary, chauvinistic and imperialist element of finance capital. This makes its greater isolation possible.

Revolutionaries, whilst promoting at all times the positive participation of the Church and attempting to give it a more meaningful role in the struggle, should not lose sight of the contradictory role which the Church can sometimes play. The Church has got a centuries-old history of vacillation and even duplicity in relation to liberation struggles around the world. The negative role of the Church is engendered by the fact that the Church's involvement is not outside class interests. The Church has never been an institution standing above society and hence unaffected by social and class conflicts. The Church has always been a propertied institution. Even in some of the instances in history where the Church took the side of the liberation forces,it was largely because the success of the liberation strugglewould secure its long-term interests. On the other hand the involvement of the Church in bourgeois democratic revolutions is sometimes encouraged by the big bourgeoisie itself. It encourages this involvement to ensure that the revolution does not become too sweeping and thorough-going. Lenin said this of the bourgeoisie:

> "... it is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie to rely on certain remnants of the past, as against the proletariat, for instance,on the monarchy... for this revolution not to be fully consistent, not complete, and not to be determined and relentless... to take place more slowly, more graduallly, more cautiously, less resolutely, by means of reform and not by means of revolution...". (Lenin: *Two Tactics of Social Democracy,* Prog. Publishers, 1977, p. 44 and 45.).

The more complete the revolution, the more advantageous to the working class and the peasantry. The Catholic Church ownership of land around the world, for example, is more aligned to feudal relations of ownership. Such ownership is not to the advantage of the peasantry — the close ally of the working class. This state of affairs has in the past generally ensured that the church aligns itself with the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary demands of the working class and the peasantry.

The Tide is Turning

Today, however, an important transformation is taking place within the Church with the realisation by many that the only way to continue to hold the hearts and minds of the people is by supporting the liberation struggle. In order for Christianity to survive, the Church has realised that it needs to address itself to the everyday problems of the community: e.g. hunger, education, forced removals, State of Emergency, pass laws, etc. To illustrate this point let me quote from ECUNEWS, the news service of the South African Council of Churches (Volume 5, 1984, p. 17);

> "The transformation to which we are called is not painless. As it confronts political and economic structures and human attitudes that hurt and oppress people, the Church will be compelled to revise its understanding of the gospel and to undergo the pain of controversy, division and the loss of members and supporters who seek to maintain the present state of affairs, and even to legitimate it by means of religious as well as other means.".

Revolutionaries, however, recognize the fact that, by participating in the struggle against oppression and exploitation, the Church is helping to remove the objective conditions on which religion has thrived over the centuries. By doing this, the Church, in the long run, is fighting against its very prosperity. This is the important reason why Christianity is divided in allegiance between the oppressor and the oppressed. Dr Allan Boesak was confirming this truth when he said:

> "We have come to realise that people are being influenced by their social and economic environment and that their thinking is influenced by the conditions in which they live. We recognize that Christians living in different situations will have different understandings of life, as well as vastly different understandings of the gospel and its demands for their lives. This is basically the answer to the question why for some people the gospel is an incomparable message of liberation, while others find in it justification for a system that exploits and oppresses". (*The Church and the Alternative Society,* 1979, p. 39).

As Christians begin to get involved in the everyday struggles of the oppressed people, they begin to realise that Christian formulae can't provide answers to all problems of national and class oppression and exploitation. They begin to seek for more scientific explanations for the way society functions and how social change can be brought about. As a result more and more Christians are beginning to learn from Marxist-Leninist categories. Let us quote ECUNEWS (Vol. 5,1984, p.15);

> "It has been made abundantly clear that the prevailing political systems, which deny most South Africans basic political and land rights in the country of their birth, give the minority group control over the means of production, enabling them to appropriate the surplus value created by the labour of the politically powerless

masses, and ensure that resources will always be unevenly allocated and distributed".

More and more sections of the clergy are beginning to 'marry' Christianity and Marxist categories of social development. Such a move should be encouraged. We should consider it as a process of learning. However, we should not shy away from constructively pointing out that Marxism-Leninism is indivisible. Any attempt to mix it with alien idealistic philosophy can only undermine it as a science.

The Church must be encouraged to play an important role in destroying the apartheid colonial regime and earn itself a respectable position in the non-racial democratic South Africa of the Freedom Charter. The Church must be given genuine respect and be accorded its legitimate role in the social and cultural transformations of our society. We have seen that its understanding of the root cause of oppression and exploitation differs from that of communists. In most cases this leads to the adoption of different methods of struggle. Nevertheless, it is still the responsibility of all revolutionaries to bring together in united action even people motivated by divergent principles.

Church ministers command a lot of reverence and respect. What they say and do goes a long way in shaping social attitudes. One important form of their involvement in the struggle is to lead their flock to the line of battle. By doing this, they will be leading the majority of the toiling masses against the apartheid colonial regime. This practical involvement provides education in struggle as to the nature of the regime and the most suitable methods of struggle against it.

Tradition of Struggle

The first meaningful involvement of the Church in the resistance struggle was by the Ethiopian movement or what has today come to be known as the African Independent Church or the Zionist Church. Although religious in appearance, the Ethiopian movement carried a real political protest along with it. It started mainly as a protest against racial discrimination and chauvinism by the missionaries. At the centre of this revolt was also the growing feeling of national consciousness which was enhanced by the growth of the mining industry in Kimberley and the Witwatersrand. The conception of an exclusively African Church grew stronger and with it came a sense of national identification and unity. It is no surprise that the Ethiopian Church produced gallant heroes who fought in the Bambata revolt.

African Independent Churches today, or Churches of the People as they prefer to be called, argue that the full history of the involvement of their Church in the Bambata rebellion has not yet been written. From the experience of the distortion of our history of resistance, one is tempted to sympathise with this sentiment. But at the same time the involvement of the African Independent Church should not be over-exaggerated. For example, Edward Roux writes that the Ethiopian sect did play some part in the affair at Byrnetown, but it was not until Bambata and Sigananda placed themselves at its head and Dinizulu gave it support that the rebellion began to pose a threat to the government.

In a recently produced booklet *Speaking For Ourselves*, published by the Institute of Contextual Theology, there is an interview with a 90-year-old archbishop Mhlophe of the Christian National Apostolic Church in Zion. His memory is said to stretch "back to the first stirring of the Spirit in the Zionist movement". He says:

> "This was against the teaching of Le Roux. He did not want people to have contact with their ancestors or to wear white garments or to carry staffs. His objection to our ancestors was based upon a decision that was taken overseas. When King Cetshwayo went overseas the British wanted to know about our god and our ancestor spirits. It was there that a decision was taken against our ancestors in order to conquer us... The missionaries used this objection to ancestors when preaching the gospel and instead of introducing Christ as he really is, they coupled him with their own culture and told us to forget our culture. The results are clear today. Blacks have become the slaves of whites.".

Not everybody agrees with everything said by Archbishop Mhlope, but he does open our eyes to the inner fibre of the consciousness of the African Church which makes it a protest Church.

It is now many years from the Bambata revolt to 1985 when Botha addressed the Zionist Church of Christ (ZCC) in Moria. A difference must be made between Leganyane and his flock. Leganyane is stinking rich from the 'collecctions' accruing to him as a result of his papacy. The overwhelming majority of those people who sat and listened to Botha are the toiling masses — the very workers who were members of unions, who go on strike and make political demands, who participate in community struggles, the rural people who have made the struggle against removals in the rural areas one of the major campaigns of the current period. In fact, it is reported in the press that Botha's speech was interspersed by a voice which kept shouting *matsogo*! This is a Sotho word for applause! This voice was obviously set up in order to avoid embarrassment to the racist president. This was no tribute to Botha's reforms.

We need to recognise that the members of the African Churches are largely the poorest of the poor, people with the lowest jobs or no jobs at all. They are people who know what it is to be oppressed and exploited. The historic origin of their Church should be seen in its correct perspective. Today there are more than 600 of these denominations spread throughout the country.

The majority of the Churches have achieved a common premise by declaring apartheid a heresy. The political implications of this achievement cannot be over-emphasized. The contribution of religious institutions in the struggle against the regime is not confined to the Christian Church but also covers the Moslem community. This development has taken a particular organisational expression in various religious institutions joining the UDF. More and more of these institutions continue to mushroom, cutting across the wide spectrum of our society. Their participation has been wide, covering the ECC, COSG's, IYY, UDF,etc.

The Kairos Document signed by 151 theologians is the recent development whose impact is likely to be far-reaching for the Church in the worsening crisis in our country. This document states:

> "A crisis is a moment of truth that shows us up for what we really are. There will be no place to hide and no way of pretending to be what we are not in fact. At this moment in South Africa the Church is about to be shown up for what it really is and no cover-up will be possible".

This document goes on to state that change

> "can only come from below, from the oppressed themselves. God will bring about change through the oppressed as he did through the oppressed Hebrew slaves in Egypt. God does not bring his justice through reforms introduced by the Pharaohs of this world".

One does not agree with everything contained in this document but it is significantly positive in outlining the place of the Church in the national liberation struggle. It does not only denounce the injustice of the regime but goes further to endorse the just demands and the struggle of those who are committed to revolutionary violence against the regime.

FROM UNGOVERNABILITY TO REVOLUTION

Some Burning issues of Strategy and Tactics

by Quadro Cabesa

The thesis of "colonialism of a special type" as set out in *The Road to South African Freedom*, the programme of the South African Communist Party, is one of the greatest achievements of our liberation movement. It exposes and lays bare the true social, political and economic relationship existing, on the one hand, between the ruling white racist minority and the oppressed black majority and, on the other, between different social classes and strata within each of these two major camps. It states:

> "South Africa is not a colony but an independent state. Yet masses of our people enjoy neither independence nor freedom. The conceding of independence to South Africa by Britain, in 1910, was not a victory over the forces of colonialism and imperialism. It was designed in the interests of imperialism. Power was transferred not into the hands of the masses of people of South Africa, but into the hands of the white minority alone. The evils of colonialism, in so far as the non-white majority was concerned, were perpetuated and reinforced. A new type of colonialism was developed, in which th oppressing white nation occupied the same territory as the oppressed people themselves and lived side by side with them."

In terms of our revolution, this new concept of colonialism of a special type has given rise to a unique combination of subjective and objective factors which make it possible to organise and wage a revolutionary war against the South African state along two dialectically interconnected lines.

The development of the struggle against the evils of colonialism, of political persecution, brutality and intransigence on the part of the colonizer, to a point where there was disillusionment amongst the masses of the people with the prospects of achieving liberation by traditional peaceful processes, and their readiness to respond to the strategy of armed struggle with all the enormous sacrifices which it entails, brought to the fore the necessity on the part of the vanguard movement to adopt the strategy of armed struggle.

On the other hand, the uniquenes of the South African conditions (not found in any other colonial country) with its high industrialisation, have given rise to a black working-class which is not only large but also relatively class-conscious and organised. The other accompanying feature of this development was large-scale urbanisation and politicisation. Combined also with the momentum (in the sense of political experience and maturity) of more than half a century of mass political mobilisation, there has arisen in South Africa those conditions which bring to the forefront of the struggle the issue of insurrection, as can be conceived of in any highly industrialised capitalist country.

It is the objective existence of these two conditions which serves as a material foundation of, and gives meaning to our strategy of combining mass political action with armed struggle.

Wave of Sabotage

The decision by the liberation movement to embark on armed struggle, whose first appearance in 1961 was signalled by a wave of sabotage acts all over the country, was essentially a link, a foundation work[1] to make possible the strategy of combining mass political action with armed struggle. Thus the initial stage of armed struggle was seen as a process which "can steadily develop conditions for the future all-out war which will eventually lead to the conquest of power".[2]

This means, therefore, that it would have been incorrect (and actually a deviation from scientific revolutionary practice) on the part of the liberation movement to have placed the issue of insurrection high on the agenda of those days.

Marxism teaches that "where there is no reactionary violence which must be overthrown, there can be no question of revolutionary violence of any kind."[3] History has recorded rare occasions where revolution develops peacefully. Under these circumstances, it is usually the case that the ruling-classes are not in possession, or are deprived of reactionary violence, especially its main instrument, the armed forces. In such cases, the revolutionary classes do not resort to violence in its highest, armed form. They employ violence in the forms of economic, political and ideological struggles[4].

However, the rarity of such occurrences in history should not serve as an exception to the "rule" that all revolutions employ force as an instrument of social change. Force, Marx said "is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one".[5]

A revolutionary war is war, and is subject to all laws which govern this complicated human activity. Therefore, any theory which seeks to understand the phenomenon of war should free itself from the mechanical application of theory. Such a theory, if it is to serve as a guide to action, should move from the premise that there is no human activity which "stands so constantly and so generally in close connection with chance as war".[5] The calculation of probabilities should, therefore, always accompany the execution of war. Secondly, it is also the duty of such a theory, among other things, after carefully and fully studying the nature of the object (enemy), to explain comprehensively the properties of the means and their probable effects, and proceed therefrom to constantly search for the causes of events and then make a comparison of means with ends. In general, it is the understanding of the above mentioned factors in their proper relationship to each other and to the conduct of war as a whole, which forms the material foundation for a strategy and tactics as a guide in the conduct of war.

Strategy and Tactics

Strategy is the art of waging a war, and aimed at winning a given war. It is the art of the use of battle(s) to achieve the aims of the war. It must direct all forces and resources and give them the aim, which must be in accordance with the ultimate objective of the war. Tactics, on the other hand, is the art of fighting directed at defeating the enemy in a given battle(s).

Strategy and tactics are "two activities mutually permeating each other in time and space, at the same time essentially different activities".[7] Needless to say, strategy determines tactics, and not the other way about. A wrong strategy will, in the final analysis, lead to the defeat of the army pursuing it, while wrong tactics may not necessarily lead to the failure or defeat of strategy. But when, on the other hand, tactics are continuously wrong, and not compatible with strategy, this will inevitably lead to the failure and defeat of strategy.

And since tactics are only applicable to a given battle(s), this in turn calls for their constant up-dating, due to different battles which are to be fought.

Conversely, since a war comprises all battles — won and lost — it follows, therefore, that strategy is not a static concept, but is always in motion, for revolutionary war itself is a great social movement.

The strategic objective of our struggle at this stage is the seizure of power from the hands of the racist white minority, and its transfer into the hands of the democratic majority. As in any war, the planning of this transfer should take into account the following factors:

— the South African state and its military power must be destroyed.
— the country must be conquered.
— the will of the enemy must be subdued.

The question that immediately arises is: in our everyday usage of the term, should we speak of the seizure of power, or the armed seizure of power, as rallying slogans and also as expressing our strategic objectives?

On the surface, the two phrases appear to be identical. But the fact that one is preferred to the other logically denotes a certain measure of difference between them.

The phrase "armed seizure of power" addresses itself immediately and more directly to the issue of insurrection. It categorically states that under our conditions, armed uprising as "a special form of political struggle"[8] addresses itself to the issues of destroying the military power of the South African state, of conquering the country and subduing the will of the enemy.

But it also answers the possibility of the transfer of power by means other than an armed uprising! This is what we mean when we say that war, more than any human affair, stands constantly and generally in connection with chance. There are instances in history where a peaceful settlement was agreed upon without the actual commencement of war. But this did not eliminate the fact that the countries involved were in a state of war, and had made necessary preparations for it!

On the other hand the phrase "seizure of power", general as it is, does not address itself more directly and clearly to the issue of insurrection. It further implies that at this stage of our revolution, when the brutality, militarism and intransigence of the Pretoria regime is no longer open to debate, there exists the possibility of a peaceful transfer of power to the majority without the need for armed struggle.

So far, the effects of using these two phrases interchangeably have shown themselves in the discussion of issues such as insurrection, arming of the masses, embryonic organs of self-government, etc.

People's War

Elsewhere we referred to the strategy of combining mass political action with armed struggle as a process, whose culmination point will lead to the conquest of power by the people. What then are the peculiarities of the present situation inside the country? Characterising the present stage of our revolution, the General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, Moses Mabhida, had this to say:

"The South African revolution stands at the momentous threshold; the Pretoria regime is not strong enough to defeat the revolution; the revolution is not yet strong enough to defeat Pretoria".[9]

This is a state of equilibrium, and "whenever two forces operate equally in opposite directions, they balance *each other*, and any phenomenon taking place in these circumstances must be explained by causes other than the effects of these two forces".[10]

It is, therefore, at such crucial historical moments that we pause to re-examine our positions, with the aim of tilting the balance in our favour.

Never before in the history of our struggle have the conditions arisen which, with such compelling urgency, call for the implementation of the strategy of a people's war, of involving more of our people in direct armed confrontation with enemy soldiers, police, informers and puppets, and making further intensive preparations to involve ever-increasing numbers of our people in such activities.

A people's war is a revolutionary war in which our entire nation — our people's army Umkhonto we Sizwe, workers, the rural masses, women, intellectuals, students, the religious community, etc. — in their capacities as organised individuals, groups and collectively, use all forms of revolutionary warfare (armed and non-combat, legal and illegal) to attack and destroy all symbols, structures and organs of apartheid power, including all those who man them. The underlying principle here is: all these forms of revolutionary warfare, even those forms of it which are aimed at achieving certain short-term goals, should have as their ultimate and fundamental objective the total destruction of the South African system.

Guerrilla Warfare

In this type of war, the people employ guerrilla tactics in combination with other forms of struggle as a weapon of the materially weak against a materially strong enemy. Guerrilla tactics are those methods of fighting in which a poorly equipped people (usually organised into small, tight and disciplined units of 3-5) initially use all conceivable rudimentary weapons (petrol bombs, pistols, hand-grenades etc.), skilfully and intelligently, to attack and destroy isolated enemy targets and to capture his weapons. When carried out on a national scale, this form of warfare will have the effect of gradually wearing out the enemy morally and materially, to a point where he can no longer resist the popular drive for freedom. Guerrilla warfare essentially addresses itself to the question of harassing, eliminating and finally destroying the enemy military power.

But the relation of forces in this type of war is not balanced. The enemy commands a huge army, police force, a network of informers, courts, a developed economy and a host of powerful and aggressive imperialist friends. Therefore to think of victory through a single big blow, and to act in disregard of his material advantages, would not take us a step further. We therefore have to protract our war, while engaging the enemy in every conceivable way, to scatter his forces and wear him down.

To protract the war is only a guiding principle. This will offer us the opportunity to build up, strengthen and develop our forces, from our present weak position to that of moral and material superiority over the enemy. Only then would the moment be opportune for a nation-wide insurrection, to concentrate all our forces to deliver the final and decisive blow against the enemy.

Ours therefore is a protracted people's war as a means in a revolutionary process towards the ultimate build-up into an insurrectionary overthrow of the South African state.

An insurrection or armed uprising as "a special form of political struggle" in a revolutionary process, is a culmination of several objective and subjective factors into a moment of unity which, when not disrupted, usually leads to the seizure of power by the rising masses. These factors may vary with different countries, but certain elements are, however, common in all insurrections.

One of these is that an insurrection is usually preceded by a revolutionary situation, which is a build-up of socio-political and economic conditions necessary for revolution. It is an objective condition of profound crisis in the old system, in which:-

— the ruling-classes have lost control over the country and can no longer rule in the same old way without changes.

— the suffering of the masses has grown more acute and intolerable.

— and as a result of these, the masses are drawn in larger and larger numbers into independent action.

A revolutionary situation may emerge as a result of various factors, eg, failure of government policy, economic shocks, national and racial conflicts, etc. However, its existence does not imply that revolution will succeed. It simply means that the objective conditions for launching a successful revolution are ripe. What is required at such moments is the readiness and ability of the vanguard movement to seize the opportunity and lead the masses to victory!

To Arm the Masses

Once we accept the eventuality of an insurrection in our revolution, and the proposition that this popular military strategy should be treated as an art[11], then there is no issue as compelling in its urgency as that of arming the masses!

The urgency of this issue becomes even more accentuated when we consider how the situation in South Africa differs from that in most developed capitalist countries. In countries where there is universal compulsory military conscription, the masses are equipped with the rudiments of warfare and the knowledge of handling weapons, and so enabled, at moments of revolution, "to make their will prevail against the warlords in command"[12]. Also to be noted are the homogeneous nature and commonness of the aspirations and revolutionary demands of the army on the one hand, and of the masses from whose ranks the army is drawn, on the other.

The importance of these two conditions could be seen in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The Bolshevik strategy for the armed uprising rested on the fact that in the decisive centres of struggle, they had the support, not only of the overwhelming majority of workers and peasants and of the armed contingents of the advanced representatives of these classes, but also of the majority of the revolutionary soldiers and sailors. These two conditions further made it possible for the Bolsheviks to organise and mobilise large forces of armed workers and peasants within a very short period of time (July to October!), and to storm the citadel of counter-revolution and seize power!

On this account, Lenin correctly concluded that "unless the revolution assumes a mass character and affects the troops, there can be no question of serious struggle".[13]

In South Africa, needless to say, the racial factor has made it impossible for our people to be initiated not only in the art of modern warfare, but also in handling elementary weaponry. Secondly, the South African army is a racist and alien force which is insensitive to the aspirations and revolutionary demands of the majority of the people.

These are the conditions (a deficiency on our part) which make the strategy of arming the masses a crucial factor in our revolution.

To wait for insurrection without having even the minimum force of:-
(a) armed workers and the rural masses;
(b) advanced contingents (MK) of the representatives of these classes;
(c) units of government troops siding with the revolution, would be tantamount to waging a war without an army!

The third point has a special significance in our revolution. Owing to the racial factor we cannot look for allies in the military, but we must work all out for the large-scale neutralisation of the South African army. The need for this has been borne out by all revolutions, in which the unconditional breakdown of the armed forces, their "disorganisation and the total breakdown of discipline have hitherto become the indispensable condition and result of all victorious revolutions".[14]

Summing up the experiences of the armed uprising in Russia in October 1917, Lenin advised: "If the revolutionary party has no majority in the advanced contingents of the revolutionary classes and in the country, insurrection is out of the question".[15]

Embryonic organs of popular power

This is also one of the questions of strategic importance which should receive the attention it deserves from the liberation movement. There is uncertainty over this issue as related to our revolution. For example, in his article criticising Comrade Mzala, Hugh Trevor (see *The African Communist* No 97, 1984) refers to these organs as "essentially not within the framework of insurrection", but of "guerilla-type of struggle". He further says that our concentration on this strategy can only "serve to keep the movement essentially on the defensive". Finally, he concludes by saying "it is in the course of working-class and peasant uprising(?) that revolutionary organs of people's power of a truly insurrectionary nature(?) will emerge".

In the development of a revolution, there arises a situation in which the enemy can no longer rule in the same old way without changes. The development of such a situation (it is a process) presupposes that there is a measure of independent action on the part of the masses, and that the masses are enforcing their will against and parallel with the will of the ruling-class. This then marks the beginning of a process of dual power, not in an administrative, but in a political sense. Under these conditions, the organised embryonic organs of people's power do not "emerge", as

Hugh Trevor maintains, but are encouraged and created by the vanguard movement.

Secondly, to say that such organs are "essentially not within the framework of insurrection but that of guerrilla-type of struggle" is to fail to grasp the essence of insurrection as a special form of political struggle, preceded by the maturing of both objective and subjective conditions necessary for revolution. It is in this regard that Lenin correctly referred to these embryonic forms of popular power as "organs of insurrection".[16] These are organs which will be called to rise when the moment arrives!

Thirdly, the issue of embarking on the strategy of encouraging and creating elementary organs of popular power will not "keep the movement essentially on the defensive", as Hugh Trevor maintains. On the contrary, these should be seen as a dialectical link connecting the strategy of making South Africa ungovernable with that of insurrection.

It becomes, therefore, a matter of urgent strategic importance for the movement to encourage and create these organs — People's Committees — to give meaning and direction to the strategy of making South Africa ungovernable.

The role of a People's Army

The role of our people's army (MK) in the protracted people's war should be seen in two ways.

Firstly, it is an instrument of armed force, rooted amongst the masses and drawing its strength from their ranks, through which the liberation movement seeks to destroy the military power of the South African state. It is an organised and advanced section of the revolutionary classes equipped with the knowledge of handling and using modern weapons and military techniques. It is a full-time professional army of political cadres. As an army, it immediately addresses itself to questions of state power, primarily as contingents of armed men with material adjuncts, such as prisons, courts, etc.[17] This includes all strategic installations from which military power is derived.

But due to the material imbalance we referred to elsewhere, this organised violence should be seen "as part of a planned build-up towards a protracted people's war".[18]

Now herein appears another role of our People's Army, which is to secure the organisation of the masses of our people into different politico-military levels to enable them to play an increasingly active role in the protracted people's war. This therefore means that MK, while engaging the enemy in different fields, should seek the active participation of the people by imparting its skills and knowledge of military science. This means the training and arming of the masses, using various methods (on-the-spot training, through comprehensive leaflets and pamphlets, etc) showing the people how to organise underground cells, how to manufacture rudimentary weapons, how to manipulate SA weapons such as pistols, revolvers, rifles, etc., the elementaries of the theory of guerrilla warfare and other basics of the art of fighting.

It is, therefore, with the active participation of the armed masses organised under various politico-military levels (militia, hit-squads, mobile guerrilla units, etc) that we shall give meaning to the strategy of combining mass political action with armed struggle.

The full knowledge of one's opponent, of his strong points as well as his weaknesses is central to military science, and hence to the formulation of a viable strategy and tactics, as a guide in the conduct of a war.

The Weak Link

As regards the strength and weaknesses of the enemy, the liberation movement, while aware of "the considerable military advantages of the enemy, of his high level of industrialisation, his ready-to-hand reserves of white manpower and his excellent roads, railways and air transport...", nevertheless anticipates that "over a period of time many of these unfavourable factors will begin to operate in favour of the liberation forces".[19]

This assumption is based on the following:-

South Africa is a highly industrialised society, and therefore not an exception to the rule that its security depends, firstly, on the ready access to strategic and essential minerals and resources. Without these, not only would its military power erode, but also its economy would stagnate, and society would begin to disintegrate in the face of consequent civil disorder and ungovernability.

Moreover, as Engels observed, "all social and political force have their source in economic preconditions .... and nothing depends more on economic preconditions than precisely the composition, organisation, armament, strategy and tactics of an army".[20]

The need to analyse the workings of the South African economy becomes imperative at this stage. A fleeting glance at the South African economy reveals the following main patterns:-

— the mining industry (especially gold) is the central nerve of the country's economy. It accounts for the bulk of the country's export goods and brings, in turn, more than 70% of the country's foreign exchange earnings.

— the whole economy depends on exports and imports.

— manufacturing industry is highly dependent on foreign technology, and heavily dominated by foreign capital.

— in almost every sector of the economy the oppressed black majority constitute the bulk of the work force.

The list is far from exhaustive, but it exposes the weak link of the South African economy at four major points, the systematic disruption of which could lead, not only to the gradual erosion of its military power, but also to the stagnation of the economy, and the disintegration of society in the face of consequent civil disorder.

Therefore, while employing armed revolutionary violence for purposes of propaganda, of inflicting human and material losses on the enemy, our movement should exert more efforts towards the systematic disruption of this weak link of the South African state.

Of course such a strategy should not be viewed as a form of revolutionary short-cut, nor as divorced from other forms of struggle. On the contrary, in the South African situation it is only under the conditions, firstly, of *relative* socio-political and economic crisis that several preconditions for waging a successful insurrection can be realised. These are the intensification of the process of training and arming the masses, of building and developing, at different politico-military organisational levels, a strong revolutionary army.

This means, therefore, that it is only under conditions of *absolute* economic, social and political crisis, on a national scale, of chaos and confusion in the ranks of the enemy and his army, of a nation-wide revolutionary upsurge by the masses that armed insurrection becomes a logical and final step.

Urban and Rural Warfare

From the foregoing, it can be clearly seen that such armed campaigns will be focused on cities and urban areas, mainly because of the high industrialisation of the country. But for such campaigns to culminate in a successful insurrection, it is of utmost strategic importance that they be combined with the political and military activisation of the countryside, which will open the possibilities of large-scale and sustained rural warfare.

The political and military activisation of the rural areas will bring several important advantages for the revolution.

From a tactical point of view, the activisation of the rural masses will gradually dislodge the high concentration of enemy forces in and around the cities and urban areas, forcing him to scatter his forces throughout the country. This in turn will make him more vulnerable to guerrilla attacks. Secondly, the activisation of such areas will open the possibilities of engaging the enemy in other effective forms of guerrilla warfare, such as mine-warfare.

Furthermore, depending on the extent to which we can establish a strong presence in these areas, turning them firstly into contested areas and later into no-go areas, serious work can then be embarked upon in setting-up small mobile bases to cater for the political and military training of cadres. It is also under these circumstances that the logistics question can, to a considerable extent, be resolved. However, this should not be equated with a strategy that is aimed at establishing liberated areas in the classical sense of the term. But once contested and later no-go areas are established, several questions of strategic importance to our revolution can be tackled, including the creation and consolidation of rural areas people's committees, as organs of self-rule and insurrection.

In concluding, let us state that, to give flesh and blood to these and other such issues which have been raised in the liberation movement, our strategy for liberation should, among other things, address the following urgent tasks of our revolution:-

— to implement, with more vigour, the strategy of making South Africa ungovernable and apartheid unworkable.

— not to allow the return of the police and informers in those townships from which the masses have driven them out, and to extend and expand this trend into yet unaffected areas. This includes the further dismantling of yet undissolved puppet councils.

— to embark on the strategy of creating people's committees, with the Freedom Charter serving as their political programme.

— to treat the strategy of arming the masses with the urgency it deserves.

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BUTHELEZI: THE POLITICS OF REFORMISM

by Molefe

A strategic objective of the forces of counter-revolution, both inside and outside South Africa, is to create a "third force" as an alternative to the Botha regime on the one hand and the revolutionary organisations of the liberation movement on the other. The so-called Chief Minister of the so-called KwaZulu bantustan, Gatsha Buthelezi, has nominated himself as a candidate for leadership of this "third force" and is playing out his counter-revolutionary role with relish. In the recent period he has unleashed venomous anti-ANC, anti-communist campaigns using chauvinism, tribalism, intimidation and Inkatha in a drive against the organisations of the people.

Inkatha was originally formed in the 1920s by Solomon, King of the Zulus, as a vehicle to mobilise support for the monarchy in the face of the social disintegration flowing from conquest and the reactionary laws adopted by the Union Parliament. After being moribund for many decades, it was revived by Buthelezi in 1975. It is correct, as Buthelezi never ceases to proclaim, that the ANC encouraged him to take on the leadership of Inkatha and accept a leading post in KwaZulu. As President O.R. Tambo explained in presenting the report of the National Executive Committee to the second consultative conference of the ANC in Zambia last June:

> "We sought that this former member of the ANC Youth League who had taken up his position in the KwaZulu bantustan after consultation with our leadership, should use the legal opportunities provided by the Bantustan programme to participate in the mass mobilisation of our people on the correct basis of the orientation of the masses to focus on the struggle for a united and non-racial South Africa. In the course of our discussions with him, we agreed that this would also necessitate the formation of a mass democratic organisation in the bantustan that he headed. Inkatha originated from this agreement.

> "Unfortunately, we failed to mobilise our own people to take on the task of resurrecting Inkatha as the kind of organisation we wanted, owing to the understandable antipathy of many of our comrades towards what they considered as working within the bantustan system. The task of reconstituting Inkatha therefore fell on Gatsha Buthelezi himself who then built Inkatha as a personal power base far removed from the kind of organisation we had visualised, as an instrument for the mobilisation of our people in the countryside into an active and conscious force for revolutionary change. In the first instance, Gatsha dressed Inkatha in the clothes of the ANC, exactly because he knew that the masses to whom he was appealing were loyal to the ANC and had for six decades adhered to our movement as their representative and their leader. Later, when he thought he had sufficient of a base, he also used coercive methods against the people to force them to support Inkatha".

Buthelezi exploited his former membership of the ANC Youth League, using the ANC flag, uniform, freedom songs and other symbols to rally support from the masses. Inkatha is wholly dominated by Buthelezi and a small clique around him. Membership of Inkatha is supposed to be open to all Africans, but in fact is over 90% Zulu and the leadership is reserved for Zulus in the constitution, which describes Inkatha's National Council as "the supreme body of the Zulu nation". Membership of Inkatha is supposed to be voluntary and Buthelezi has claimed that it totals about 1 million. In fact, however, Inkatha membership is mainly based on coercion and compulsion. The KwaZulu state apparatus which receives a subsidy of over R200 million per annum from the racist regime uses it to distribute resources and patronage only to members of Inkatha. In KwaZulu it is almost impossible to get land, reference books, housing, scholarships and jobs if one is not a member of Inkatha. Inkatha has a "Youth Service Corps for Social Reconstruction organised on a paramilitary basis. It runs youth camps on military lines with special emphasis on physical training. The racist regime allows this body to function openly because of its anti-people, counter-revolutionary role. Members of this corps are known to have attacked and killed opponents of the regime, especially, in the recent period, members of the United Democratic Front.

The Role of Class

Inkatha claims to be a broad movement in which class plays no role because the struggle is not a "class struggle but a people's struggle"! It is a common practice for reactionaries to claim that class has no significance and that they treat poor and rich alike. But in practice the reactionaries work in favour of monopoly capital. An interesting example is the involvement in KwaZulu of

Bata, the multi-national shoe manufacturer. Bata has a factory at Keate's Drift, in the middle of rural KwaZulu. Bata "employs" women who work at home on a temporary basis sewing the uppers of shoes. These women are paid the miserly sum of R3 to R4 for 10 pairs of shoes. If there is no work, there is no pay. These workers were organised by the National Union of Textile Workers which in 1981 came into conflict with Bata at its factory at Loskop, KwaZulu. At that time Bata responded by shifting its production to other factories and drastically reducing its workforce at Loskop. However, this time the NUTW contacted the Canadian Labour Congress which supported the workers and prevented Bata from taking drastic reprisals. The CLC found a super-exploited labour force who after 10 years' service received only R52 a week. Even a death in a worker's family is not considered sufficient reason for absence from work. Buthelezi claims that he seeks "harmonious relations" between capital and labour, but conditions at Bata do not seem a vindication of his policy.

Action by the working class in KwaZulu and in Natal province as a whole has been opposed by Buthelezi, who brands trade unions which seek to defend the interests of their members as "agitators" and "trouble makers". Buthelezi and Inkatha peddle the illusion that class contradictions and the antagonism between capital and labour can be removed by harmonising their interests. But the contradiction and conflict of interests between those who own the means of production and those who have nothing to sell but their labour power can never be resolved within the framework of capitalism, whether or not that capitalism has a "human face".

The main social base of Buthelezi's empire comprises certain traditional representatives of the Zulus and an aspiring bourgeoisie drawn from the ranks of the big traders and the upper echelons of the middle class, especially those employed in the bantustan state apparatus. By using their control of the KwaZulu state apparatus and subservience to local and foreign monopoly capital these groups are attempting to develop into a bureaucratic bourgeoisie. These elements identify their interests not with the masses but with the racist regime and monopoly capitalism.

Strategy and Tactics

In the recent period Buthelezi's criticism of the strategy and tactics pursued by the ANC and its allies has become increasingly strident and hysterical. He insists on labelling the ANC as the "ANC's mission in exile" and pours scorn on the necessity and viability of armed struggle as an essential component of our revolutionary strategy for national liberation. His opposition to armed struggle is not based on principle but on expediency. In a memorandum which he submitted to US Senator Kennedy Buthelezi claimed:

> "There is no arena . . . which can be turned into a liberated zone, the logistics of the armed struggle make it a pipe-dream . . . Black South Africans (do not) support an armed struggle they cannot see succeeding".

And in an aide memoire to US Congressmen and Senators he alleged that the oppressed "do not wish to pay terrible prices for failing strategies".

Worse still, Buthelezi constantly equates the violence of the state, including its brutal street massacres, its executions and death squads, with the revolutionary violence of the people and their representative organisations who defend the lives and interests of the masses against their oppressors. Buthelezi has not said a single word in condemnation of the violence perpetrated by Inkatha impis on UDF activists, churchmen and community organisers. He is fond of alleging that the ANC has "lost the battle for the confidence of South African blacks", and adds:

> "Having become terrified of any movement in South Africa which threatens to become powerful, they have now turned to killing those who disagree with them". (*Daily Dispatch* 1.1.1985).

At a rally marking King Shaka Day Buthelezi accused ANC President O. R. Tambo of "sowing the seeds of civil war" from the "shadow of foreign flags". At the same rally King Zwelethini warned that the Zulus would rise in their thousands and drive out the ANC leaders if they tried to set foot in South Africa. (*Sunday Times* 29.9.1985).

Buthelezi also claims that his peaceful "multistrategy of liberation" has had success as opposed to the ANC's policy of violence. Nobody knows what his "multistrategy of liberation" is because he never does anything except talk, but he claims Botha's cosmetic reforms as proof of his point. It is, of course, absurd for Buthelezi to argue tht the ANC's armed revolutionary struggle has had no impact on the political life of South Africa. It is the liberation movement headed by the ANC, not Buthelezi, which has brought the Botha regime to its knees, forced it to declare a state of emergency and default on its foreign debts. It is the valour of our comrades in Umkhonto we Sizwe, in the underground and in prison, keeping up the fight in the bleakest days, which has inspired the youth to new heights of inventiveness and daring in the battle against the enemy. It is the ANC and the SACP, not Buthelezi and Inkatha, which are the targets for Botha's vituperation. We, not they, are held to blame for the crisis in which the white supremacists find themselves. It is precisely to counter the revolutionary upsurge of the people in response to the leadership of the ANC that the racist regime and local and foreign monopoly capital are feting Buthelezi and trying to use him as their instrument for the creation of a "third force".

Buthelezi's "multistrategy of liberation" is a one-dimensional reformist strategy which would ensure that real economic power would remain in the hands of the monopolists and political power would be parcelled out in such a way that the white minority would always be able to exercise ultimate control and domination. His reformist approach to the struggle demonstrates that he fears the masses, has no confidence in their ability to govern and is pessimistic about the possibility of success through confrontation with the enemy. All he really wants is a dispensation for himself and his small coterie of aspirant bureaucratic bourgeoisie.

Buthelezi and the PFP

Buthelezi has issued a stream of statements, speeches and articles all designed to present him as a respectable and responsible politician. His call for interim measures such as the "sharing of power" short of one person one vote majority rule conforms to the demands of the Progressive Federal Party. Together they project the concept of "consociational democracy" first outlined by the Dutch political scientist Arendt Lijphart. This vague concept is nothing more than elitism even in terms of bourgeois democracy.

A Mark II version of the 1980 Buthelezi Commission report is the recent call of PFP leader Frederick van Zyl Slabbert for the formation of a Convention Alliance. In support of this call Slabbert wrote:

> "I suggest it because our country is polarising at a rate of knots between two simplistic options: brutal repression on the one side and brutal revolt on the other". (*Sunday Times* 8.9.1985)

With amazing alacrity Buthelezi supported this call, as did the bourgeois owned and controlled English-language press. Buthelezi was hailed as the "saviour" of South Africa. After the call was issued a convention to found the alliance was held attended by 150 representatives of the PFP, Inkatha and big business. The United Democratic Front and other democratic organisations refused the invitation. The ANC issued a statement criticising the political and ideological policies of Buthelezi and Slabbert, declaring:

> "There can be no discussion of a negotiated settlement while the leaders of our people are in prison. Furthermore, any negotiations would have to be about the transfer of power to the democratic majority. The issue of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa is not negotiable". (*Guardian* 23.9.1985)

The feverish activities of South African monopoly capital, the PFP and Buthelezi are attempts to save a decaying socio-economic system. The Convention Alliance is intended to outflank the ANC and to dampen the revolutionary struggle. The initiators of the scheme dread the escalating mass struggle in which armed revolutionary action is indispensable. The reactionaries and the reformists try to chill the blood of the people and the international community by describing armed revolutionary struggle in the most blood-curdling terms, but they remain deathly silent about the colonial murder, rape and enslavement of the people of Namibia and the death and destruction sown by the South African military, agents and mercenaries in the frontline states.

Sanctions

The campaign for the imposition of sanctions on racist South Africa is gathering steam. To stem this growing pressure the racist regime and monopoly capital — local and foreign — need the assistance of a so-called "respectable" black politician. Once more Buthelezi fulfils this role. In speeches, articles and memoranda to US politicians Buthelezi pontificates on the sanctions issue in the name of the oppressed masses. In his memo to Senator Kennedy Buthelezi claims:

> "*South Africa's 21 million Blacks are entirely dependent on mining, commerce and industry for survival.
>
> *The economic isolation of South Africa which robs Blacks of jobs is rejected by the masses . . .
>
> *The South African industrial base has already reached the point in development which, if combined with the country's range of mineral wealth, will ensure that external economic pressures will stimulate internal economic development, from which Whites will benefit preferentially.
>
> *The future of Black South Africa after liberation depends upon the development of a robust, viable economy."

Buthelezi's claims are far removed from reality. Almost all recent surveys indicate that the majority of Black people are in favour of sanctions. History has demonstrated that the so-called "boom" period of the economy was characterised by fierce repression, wholesale massacres, mass removals and intolerable levels of unemployment and poverty. By their daring and death-defying actions in the recent period the millions of our people have shown that they are ready to pay a heavy price for freedom and national liberation. It is Buthelezi who is out of step, not the ANC and progressive humanity. He who speaks out against sanctions today speaks not for the people but for those who have everything to lose from the revolutionary transformation of South Africa.

Not surprisingly Reagan and Thatcher have clutched Buthelezi to their bosoms. Both use him to justify their reactionary alliance with the Pretoria regime and he has been invited to the White House and No. 10 Downing

Street. Clearly anyone who is the friend of Reagan and Thatcher can only be an enemy of the people of South Africa. It is Reagan who finances the terrorist counter-revolutionary attacks on the government and people of Nicaragua, who invaded tiny Grenada in October 1983, who promotes the backward-looking counter-revolutionaries in Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Mozambique and Angola, who fully supports the international terrorism of Israel and the slaughter of Palestinians.

In an attempt to justify his position, Buthelezi stresses that by opposing sanctions he is also fighting for the redistribution of wealth in South Africa. But without a revolutionary transformation of society and the transfer of power to the people it is impossible to redistribute wealth in favour of the masses. In any political dispensation where real power is in the hands of the white minority and monopoly capital, the masses can never expect to receive more than a few crumbs of the cake. It is not demagogy, rhetoric or fine speeches that bring about the redistribution. This will only be possible after South Africa has been truly liberated and the working people are masters of their own destinies.

Dirty Business

Last year a number of UDF activists were killed by "armed warriors" who are widely believed to be Inkatha impis. These impis roam the streets of Durban townships such as Umlazi, KwaMashu and Lamontville in a bid to "purge" the townships of UDF leaders and supporters. One of the freedom fighters killed was Thabo Robert Mokoena, an organiser of the National Federation of Workers, a UDF affiliate. A number of UDF members have gone underground not only to escape arrest and torture at the hands of the racist police, but also to evade attack by Inkatha thugs. In the course of criticising those who seek "confrontation" rather than "reconciliation" Buthelezi characterises the UDF as an ANC front organisation. At a time when the racist regime is pressing trumped-up charges of high treason against UDF leaders, this false equation of the UDF with the ANC is tantamount to assisting the regime's attempts to destroy the people's organisations.

Students, churchmen and community leaders who follow a militant line are also the targets of Inkatha hostility. A number of leading African churchmen have been physically attacked and warned about their future conduct. The Rev. Wesley Mabuza, a leading member of Diakonia, an organisation of Christian churches in the Durban area, was forced to go underground. Inkatha also launched a campaign to remove the Rev. Mcebisi Xundu, the Natal chairman of the UDF, from his parish in

Lamontville and from Natal. (He was later detained by Matanzima's police in the Transkei.) Those who attend the funerals of victims of apartheid are often physically attacked by well-armed men generally considered to be Inkatha impis. Community leaders such as David Sponono Gasa of the Umlazi Residents' Association have received threats of death and mutilation. Gasa went underground after his home was twice petrol bombed and razed to the ground.

Buthelezi disclaims responsibility for these occurrences and says the ANC is responsible for what he calls "black on black" confrontation. The very use of the term and concept of "black on black" confrontation places Buthelezi on the side of the enemy. The anger of our people and their organisations is directed at the enemy and his institutions and instruments. It was not the ANC that organised the attacks on Indian shops and families in Durban. Nor was it the ANC that organised the petrol bomb attack on the home of Professor Fatima Meer a day after she had criticised Buthelezi and Inkatha.

Inkatha elements have also been responsible for the campaign of intimidation directed against Xhosas living in Natal. Attacks have been launched against Xhosas, and the demand is then voiced that, as the source of "friction", they must be expelled from the province. Two heroic freedom fighters, Griffith and Victoria Mxenge, classified by their enemies as "Xhosa lawyers", were murdered in the most brutal fashion. Nobody has been arrested for these crimes, and the people are convinced that there is collusion between the army, police and Inkatha elements in the drive against the people's organisations and leaders in Natal. Certainly the fanning of tribalism and chauvinism which is associated with Inkatha can only be to the advantage of the racist regime and its policies of ethnic division.

In spite of vicious attacks from the racist regime and Inkatha, the UDF continues the struggle. In a statement issued last August, the UDF called on the international community to impose sanctions on South Africa and demanded the release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners and the lifting of the state of emergency. In contrast, by his statements and actions, Buthelezi shows himself vehemently opposed to the anti-racist forces inside and outside the country and on major issues of policy opposes the line of the ANC. It is no accident that in the eyes of the people Buthelezi has come to be identified with the enemy whose stand on the armed struggle and sanctions he supports, and whose campiagn to "keep Natal and KwaZulu peaceful and stable" he endorses in appeals for overseas investment. In his stance as a "leader" Buthelezi displays more and more arrogance. A letter from him printed in *The Sowetan* (16.8.1985) stated:

> "The writing which you present as Comment is no more than poison from a witch's cauldron prepared to further divide black from black ... You may simply in the end be a tiny-minded little man driven to the borders of insane jealousy because my political prestige is mounting and because I am consulted not only by all leading South Africans but by international leaders such as President Reagan and Mrs Margaret Thatcher ... You are disturbed, Sir. If you cannot lead, then you must follow".

Buthelezi is a descendant of the Zulu aristocracy and claims he is walking in the footsteps of the great Kings of Zulus such as Csetwayo and Shaka. But he is certainly not following the noble traditions of resistance to colonialism and unity of the oppressed established by his great forebears.He is the camp-follower, not the enemy, of imperialism and neo-colonialism. That is why he has been selected by Reagan, Thatcher, the *Daily Telegraph* and Botha as the most suitable case for leadership of the "third force". He should be reminded that in the eyes of the people whose cause he is betraying he is a suitable case for treatment. Even the opinion polls show he is not wanted.

* * *

The tribal organisations must co-operate with the African National Congress, with African trade unions and with the Communist Party in order to struggle for improvements in the conditions of the people.

Alpheus Maliba, Venda people's
leader and Communist, December 1939

* * *

SANCTIONS — IMPERIALISM LOOKS AFTER ITS OWN

by Phineas Malinga

The idea of sanctions against South Africa has been around for well over thirty years. The government of India can claim credit for much of the earliest work done to get the idea off the ground. India's record goes back to the earliest years after independence; indeed it could be said that action against South Africa formed part of the programme with which the Indian National Congress took power in 1947.

The target at that time was not the entire racialist systemof South Africa, but more specifically the discrimination against the population of Indian origin. The antagonist was not the Nationalist government of South Africa but its United Party predecessor. India was the first country to break off diplomatic relations with South Africa in protest against racial discrimination. By 1954, this policy had been pursued much further. In that year, a law was passed prohibiting all trade between India and South Africa. This action was not without cost for India; there had been an appreciable volume of trade between the two countries, particularly in jute and tea.

The law of 1954 remains on the Indian statute book to this day. Throughout the intervening 31 years, India has maintained a principled position, now based on opposition, not merely to discrimination against the Indian community, but to the whole apartheid system.

Virtually from the first day of admission to membership of the United Nations Organisation, India has raised the South African question in that forum and has called for international action. A favourable response soon came from the socialist countries, led by the Soviet Union. These countries formed, together with India, a group which was at first in a minority in UNO but which gradually, over the years, won more and more support until it commanded a majority. The first resolution of the UN General Assembly calling for sanctions was passed in 1962, since when there has never been any doubt that a majority of world governments were prepared to endorse the principle. (Practice, in some cases, has been a different matter).

Meanwhile, the question of sanctions had been carried on to a different plane when Chief Albert Lutuli, President General of the African National Congress, in 1959 called upon the people of the world to boycott South African products. This opened up a completely new possibility — that even in countries where governments refused to take any action against apartheid, the people themselves, by refusing to purchase South African products and taking other, similar action, could bring trade between their countries and the apartheid regime to a halt. Chief Lutuli's call won immediate attention. In Britain, an organisation called the Boycott Movement was immediately formed to respond to Chief's call. It subsequently became the Anti-Apartheid Movement, which has now a quarter of a century of work behind it as a solidarity organisation in support of the South African liberation struggle. Throughout those years the concept of sanctions, both at the government level and in the form of popular boycotts, has been central to the policy of the AAM. The same is true of the similar movements which have arisen in many countries of the world. Today, popular movements committed to sanctions exist in the USA, Canada, West Germany, France, the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand, among other countries. In other words, there are very few countries in which the policy of sanctions has not been adopted either by the government or by one or more popular movements.

The Opponents

How does it come about that a policy which has commanded a majority in the General Assembly of the United Nations for more than twenty years has not been fully implemented? The answer is not far to seek. Resolutions in favour of sanctions have more than once been vetoed by the United States and the United Kingdom. They are, however, not the only opponents of sanctions. West Germany has until recently been as implacably opposed to sanctions as the two veto powers. France and Japan have made gestures in the direction of sanctions from time to time but remain trading partners of the apartheid regime. Even countries such as Norway and the Netherlands, from whose governments a good deal of anti-apartheid rhetoric is heard, have made no attempt to cut off trade.

In short, the capitalist governments of the North Atlantic bloc form a minority of world governments which stubbornly refuse to accept the views of the majority. These are, of course, the key countries for the international economic relations of the apartheid regime. They are the centres of the imperialist system, into which the South African economy was fully integrated. They are South Africa's main trading partners and main sources of capital. Whatever the rest of the world may do, it is the action of these countries that is crucial to the success or failure of sanctions as a policy. South Africa's five principal trading partners are the USA, Japan, UK, West Germany and Switzerland, in that order. In 1984, these five imported South African goods to a total value of R7,109 million. By comparison, the rest of Africa imported R797 million worth. The five biggest investors in South Africa are UK, USA, West Germany, France and Switzerland, in that order. Their total investments at the end of 1982 were approximately £26,500 million, compared with £5,000 million for the rest of the world.

From these figures, not only the importance of these countries' position, but also their motivation is clear. They profit from apartheid. Together with their partners, the South African bourgeoisie, they share in the benefits of paying starvation wages to African workers. South African raw materials are valuable to them. South African coal helps to break coal miners' strikes in their own industry. It is not in the least surprising that there should be an extreme reluctance by the Western and Japanese capitalists and their governments to interfere in any way with their lucrative contacts with South Africa.

Irresistible Pressure

Nevertheless, there has been some movement in the positions of these governments. To what factors is this movement to be attributed? One factor which can be largely discounted is the party politics of the countries concerned. In Britain, resolutions in favour of sanctions have been adopted by the Labour Party Conference and the Trade Union Congress but the actual record of Labour governments is not noticeably better than that of Conservative governments. Similarly, in the USA, there are numerous advocates of sanctions in the Democratic Party but they have not succeeded in carrying their ideas into reality under Democratic administration. In Germany the record of the Social Democrats is indistinguishable from that of the Christian Democrats. In France, the hopes aroused by the election of Mitterand were soon disappointed.

It is events in South Africa that have made a difference. The first breakthrough came in the aftermath of Soweto, June 16, 1976. The UN Security Council reacted immediately to the events of Soweto with a resolution of June 19, 1976, condemning the killings by the South African government. It took more than a year of argument and manoeuvring to get teeth put into that resolution. Finally, however, on November 4, 1977, the Security Council for the first time adopted a resolution under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, containing a modest measure of mandatory sanctions against South Africa. This was the arms embargo, which has remained in force ever since. Observance of the embargo has been less than satisfactory. Police and prosecuting authorities in Western capitalist countries have shown little zeal in combating the ingenious and indefatigable efforts of South Africa to evade the embargo. Governments such as the British have consistently decided borderline cases in favour of South Africa, allowing items such as aircraft and radar to go to South Africa on the pretext that they were for civilian use. Nevertheless, the fact that the arms embargo was voted and remains on the record represents an important step forward.

Recent events in South Africa have again put capitalist governments under pressure. The sources of pressure have been various. In the USA it has been mainly due to domestic pressure that Reagan has found himself compelled to make concessions. Inspired by the spectacle of the South African people in revolt, the American Left has mounted a remarkable campaign of demonstrations in Washington and elsewhere. The black community, led by such figures as Jesse Jackson, has played a prominent role.

For reasons that are not easy to understand, the black community in Britain has been far less effective in taking up the South African issue, while the black community in France has played no perceptible role at all. In spite of the noble efforts of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, it cannot be said that the British government has come under the same degree of popular pressure as the US government. In Britain's case, the most effective pressure has been exercised by the Commonwealth governments, and by the need to keep in step with the rest of the EEC.

A Long Way To Go

We are, however, still a long way from a situation in which imperialism is prepared to abandon its South African outpost. The aim of Reagan, Thatcher, Kohl and Mitterand clearly is to make the minimum concessions which they judge necessary to cope with the pressure brought to bear on them, while still preserving the substance of their links with the Pretoria regime. The grudging gestures which they are now making to appease the demand for sanctions contrast starkly with the forthright decisions which India took more than thirty years ago.

France was the first to adopt this tactic, with a ban on new investment in South Africa. By comparison with the position of the world majority, this is manifestly inadequate, but it is the most substantial measure so far taken by a major capitalist power. The others have not gone nearly as far. (A cynic might remark that France is short of funds for foreign investment anyway, so the ban happens to suit the government's general economic policy).

The sanctions announced by the US administration on September 9, 1985, comprised a ban on computer sales to South African security agencies, a ban on the transfer of nuclear technology to South Africa, an ambiguously worded restriction on new bank loans to the S.A. government and a ban on Krugerrand sales in the USA. Of these, the first will be easily evaded in a world market glutted with second hand computers. The second and third could be measures of some substance, while the fourth is a mere gesture. The package as a whole falls very far short of a serious effort to bring the economic power of the USA to bear upon the problem of ending racist exploitation in South Africa. The object was plainly not to cripple the South African regime, but on the contrary to go on shielding it from serious harm, while appeasing progressive opinion with token sanctions.

South Africans themselves had no doubt on this score. Mr Johann Cloete, of Barclays National Bank, described the American sanctions as 'limited' and 'unlikely to aggravate the economic situation of the country.' Chief Buthelezi praised Reagan's 'restraint and sense of responsibility', while Bishop Desmond Tutu dismissed the American action as 'an insect bite'. As for Botha himself, he 'regretted' the sanctions but pointed out that they were 'less harmful' than the measures suggested in the American Congress, and that they had been accompanied by the return of the US Ambassador to Pretoria.

The spotlight then switched on to the EEC — hitherto a very unpromising forum for discussion of sanctions against South Africa. Of the ten EEC member states, three of the smaller ones — Denmark, Ireland and the Netherlands — had a modest record of opposition to apartheid, while a fourth — Greece — had a generally leftish stance. The remaining six were among the world's most notorious backsliders on the South African issue. Now, however, with the USA and France having gone over to a policy of token sanctions, the other EEC states began to wonder whether they should not do the same.

On September 10 the Foreign Ministers of the ten states met. Nine of them agreed to the following measures:-

Rigorous enforcement of the existing arms embargo.

Refusal to buy arms from South Africa.

No cooperation with South Africa in the military sphere.

Withdrawal of military attachés

No new cultural and scientific agreements 'except if they are of such a nature as to contribute towards the elimination of apartheid or do not have a tendency to support it.'

Freezing of sporting contacts.

Prohibition of oil exports to South Africa.

Prohibition of exports of 'sensitive material' destined for the South African police or armed forces.

No nuclear collaboration.

It will easily be seen that these measures do not touch the mainstream of economic relations between South Africa and Western Europe. Only two items of any eonomic importance are included — the oil and nuclear embargoes. Of these, the importance of the oil embargo is, to say the least, diminished by the fact that there are no exporters of oil among the nine states which agreed the measures. The tenth EEC member state and only oil exporter among them, the United Kingdom, refused to agree even to this list of measures.

Commonwealth Conference

Thus the government of Mrs Thatcher emerged as the most intransigent opponent of the South African liberation struggle among the nations of the world. It continued in this role during the Commonwealth conference of October, 1985. The Commonwealth conference is a forum in which South African affairs have been repeatedly discussed over the years. The background to such discussions has changed immensely since the days when South Africa itself was a senior member of the club, reacting with indignation against the presumption of the newcomer, India, in raising the question of South Africa's 'domestic affairs'.

The admission of independent African and Caribbean states was one source of change and the evolution of the attitude of Canada, Australia and New Zealand was another. Though it is doubtful whether the three last mentioned states are yet ready for serious sanctions, they have moved a long way from the wholly negative attitudes which they displayed in earlier decades. It was accordingly clear during the run-up to the 1985 conference that the United Kingdom government was going to be isolated in opposing every kind of action against South African racism. This fact did not appear to dismay Mrs Thatcher and we should not fall into the error of imagining that her personal tendency towards stubbornness was the whole explanation of her posture.

On October 15 *The Times* published a major editorial, the first in a series of three, under the title 'No to Sanctions'. In this article, the voice of the British Establishment churned out every possible and impossible argument against sanctions. The bogey of job losses in British industry was paraded, although the Anti-Apartheid Movement has often pointed out that the shifting of work from Britain to South Africa by multi-national enterprises such as Ford Motors has actually caused job losses in British industry over the last ten years. Having expressed the usual hypocritical concern for the hardships of the frontline states, the writer went on to insult those states by alleging that 'many of their citizens have already voted with their feet for South Africa.' Next came an ignorant insult to 'the expatriate ANC leadership which looks forward to conditions which would naturally be intolerable to the other three races.' Finally, and grotesquely, *The Times* dared to insult the struggling South African masses with the suggestion that 'the black forces would be tempted to sit back and let sanctions do most of the work first until they could just move in for the kill without having to endure the responsibility of serious negotiations.'

Perhaps more worthy of serious attention than this sort of stuff was the newspaper's clear espousal of a position *against* 'the idea of a unitary state based on one-man-one-vote'. Such frankness is rare. The more usual style nowadays, whether a capitalist spokesman is opposing sanctions outright or trying to sell the idea of token sanctions, is to begin with the words 'I abhor apartheid, but . . .' Then follow such propositions as that one should not interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries, that sanctions do not work or that the black people of South Africa would be hurt by sanctions. The truth, however, is as *The Times* revealed it. The international imperialist system, of which the South African ruling class is a fully paid-up member, is against the creation in South Africa of a unitary state based on one-man-one-vote. Though some imperialist leaders may disapprove of some actions of the South African government, they disapprove far more strongly, not only of the possibility of socialism in South Africa, but also of the prospect of a national democratic revolution. In the present struggle of the South African people they are on the other side.

Mrs Thatcher did the imperialists proud at the Commonwealth conference. From her position in a minority of one, she vetoed one proposal after another. There were days of negotiations between her on the one side and the rest of the conference on the other. The final result was agreement on another list of token sanctions, very similar to those adopted by the USA. The only concrete steps which the UK government agreed to take were to prohibit the import of Krugerrands and to withdraw government finance from trade fairs and trade missions to South Africa. In presenting this result to the public on television, Mrs Thatcher made not the slightest pretence that she had been converted to the idea of serious action against South Africa. She was at pains to minimise the importance of the decisions taken, which she described as 'tiny'. 'Do you know the total value of our annual imports of Krugerrands?' she sneered. 'Half a million pounds!'

The Commonwealth conference communique spoke grandly about giving South Africa a period of six months, after which there would be a 'review of progress towards an end of apartheid and consideration of further measures in the event of such progress being absent.' But whatever effect this might otherwise have had disappeared when Mrs Thatcher made it clear that her position on further sanctions would be the same in six months' time as it was at the conference.

The Role of Sanctions

What conclusions are we to draw about the role of sanctions in the liberation struggle?

To begin with, one thing is clear. There is not the slighest truth in the insolent suggestion of *The Times* that sanctions might 'do most of the work', leaving the South African people to reap the benefit of a victory handed to them on a plate. The effect of sanctions can only be negative; they can weaken the enemy but they cannot strengthen the people or create the new society for which the people fight. The role of sanctions can only be to support the South African people in the historic task which belongs to them alone.

The next thing that must be said is that if the world united to take the economic measures which lie within its power, the effect would be immense. The South African economy is heavily dependent on foreign trade and foreign capital. If the USA, UK, France, West Germany, Japan and Switzerland took tomorrow the steps that India took thirty years ago, the present South African economy would be destroyed. That does not mean that the power of the South African ruling class would automatically be at an end; there are many ways in which it could conceivably fight on. Still less does it mean that a democratic South Africa would automatically be born. Democracy has to be built from the ground upwards. Nevertheless, sanctions could change the balance of power so substantially that the people's victory would be greatly accelerated.

This, however, is assuming that imperialism is prepared to destroy its own creation. The present South African regime was made by imperialism and is part of imperialism. The events of 1985 make it clear that imperialism still intends to stand by its own. The demand for sanctions has become too strong to ignore but the imperialist plan now is to fob it off with insignificant gestures.

Progressives throughout the world will continue to fight against this cynical plan. They know they have the solid and reliable support of the socialist countries, whose total boycott of South Africa and support for the liberation movement is a by-word amongst nations and perhaps, even, taken too much for granted. They know, too, that India's example is spreading amongst the non-aligned nations, placing the South African economy under ever-increasing pressure. The deliquent countries who persist in trading with South Africa are a small minority in the world. To help bring the suffering and slaughter in South Africa to a speedy end, it is vital to ensure that this minority is brought round to the point of view of the majority.

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All the historic strivings of the South African people to achieve liberty, equality and fraternity are interlinked with and related to the world-wide movement of the peoples to avert the horrors of new wars and to compel the Great Powers to negotiate a lasting peace. The aggressive forces in the USA and its satellites, which seek to profit from war preparations and from war itself, must be compelled to give way.

"South Africa's Way Forward",
Statement by Moses Kotane, May 1954

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AMANDLA CONQUERS THE WORLD

A Profile of the ANC's Cultural Ambassadors

by W. Skoda

One of the most explosive laws ever passed by the Nationalist Government was the Bantu Education Act of 1953, setting up a segregated system of education for the African people. It was a cruel, premeditated act of discrimination, which not only inflamed the passions of all who suffered under it but also built a loathing for South Africa throughout the world.

The motive of this Act was to permanently reduce the vast majority of Africans to the ranks of hewers of wood and drawers of water, so that, in the words of its progenitor Hendrik Verwoerd "the black people must understand that they are not allowed to graze in the green pastures of European society". It was designed to confine the 'Bantu' to the level of primary-school standards, where such vital subjects as mathematics could not be taught. Only a handful of Africans would be able to slip through such a net to secondary school and higher levels.

While the Act was being debated in Parliament, its opponents predicted that this was a time-bomb which would inevitably explode and create havoc throughout the land. The surprise is that it took such a long time to do so.

In 1976 the spark was set off by the insistence of the racist government that Afrikaans was to be a compulsory subject in all schools for African children. The 'Soweto Uprising' spread throughout the country. Hundreds of children were shot down ruthlessly by the racist police and army. These children were doing no more than use the normal democratic right of demonstrating against what they regarded as an unjust law. They were venting their anger and frustration, not only against the language of the oppressor, but also against the flagrantly inferior education they were receiving. They had had enough, and they were prepared to confront the might of the state to show it.

This they did in heroic measure, armed only with sticks and stones. Guns finally prevailed over stones, but, as far as the young participants were concerned, the die had been cast. Hundreds crossed the borders to seek redress for the sacrifices made by their brothers, sisters and friends who had been killed or wounded or were being tortured by the notorious agents of BOSS. There were others who were simply escaping from the clutches of the marauding gangs of the Special Branch looking for victims in every township.

The great majority came to the ANC. They had been brought up by parents who knew or had been the followers of this banned organisation. The songs they sang were in praise of Mandela, Sisulu, Tambo and Slovo. But many of them were non-political. They knew that life would be difficult. Some had left through the underground route, others by simply boarding trains and others by foot-slogging many hundreds of miles through the bush. Some families were aware of their children's escapes. It took others years to find out that their loved ones were safe and sound in the bosom of the liberation organisation.

The formation of 'Amandla', the ANC's cultural group, did not take place immediately. Small groups of people were "making music" in their various places of exile. There were not many instruments available at the time — several 'penny whistles', an occasional guitar, mouth-organs and a few drums acquired locally. But they improvised, with tin cans, bottles filled to various levels with water — just anything. Before long regular groups were formed in various camps and areas and in different countries.

Among them were some gifted lyricists and a few ccomposers. Very soon new songs of liberation flowed from the camps, as more and more young people put their minds to composing music. They even turned the Freedom

Charter into song. It was inspiring to visit these places and, as evening approached, after the daily duties, to see groups of young men and women gathering in the gloaming, all contributing to the birth of a new song. And the birth wasn't always easy. The debates and arguments were not confined only to the music but were often also about the political content before the song emerged. This music-making was going on everywhere. Freedom songs were springing up wherever the young people got together — in many cases thousands of miles from each other.

Whenever ANC groups gathered together to celebrate our national days, different groups would perform in concert — poetry, songs instrumental music, and dances.

The main centre of such groups was in the camps in Angola. There our troubadours were able to get together more easily, and soon a rapport sprang up between many of these groups and individuals. They found that it was necessary, to develop their ideas on politics as well as music, to weld them together. They would have lengthy discussions on national and international politics. They would visit each other as often as possible, when transport was available or when their duties necessitated movement between different areas. They were conscious of their lack of musical and even academic tuition. But the urge to express themselves and their obvious talent inspired them to form a musical unit in which they could act as "Ambassadors of the ANC".

It was while this plan was being formulated that a significant event occurred which was to accelerate the birth of this ensemble.

Youth Festival

The World Festival of Youth to be held in Cuba in 1978 was the occasion for all the most active young men and women of talent to be chosen to perform before the many thousands who would assemble in Havana in June of that year.

The announcement of the numbers of people invited to the Festival was made in March 1978. Inevitably a large slice of the ANC contingent would be members of a musical company. These were drawn from all over Africa and from amongst students in the socialist countries and in Western Europe. The various groups had about two and a half months to prepare for this great occasion.

The backyard of the main ANC house in Luanda was the venue not only for the general preparations but also for the chosen specialists like Comrades Papa Bopape, Sexton Dhlomo, Ndondo Khuze, Gibson Sondlo, Sandile

Khumalo and others, to knock the different groups into a cohesive whole.

There were problems. One group had been concentrating on the gum-boot dance, another on poetry and drama, while others were more attuned to 'Indlamu' — the traditional dance — or the 'penny whistle', and so on. Fortunately, every section knew and sang revolutionary songs and choruses. However, not one person really had more than an inkling about the production side.

The preparatory period was an absolute nightmare for the comrades responsible. They had to teach the drummers to synchronise with the traditional dancers; they had to make a cohesive whole out of a variety of differing parts. On top of everything each performer in the party had to undertake at least one extra task, like driving the vans or seeing to the lighting effects or stage management.

When eventually the time came to leave for Cuba, the members of the troupe had been bullied, cajoled and driven — all volunteering in very good spirit — into a viable concert party, confident of upholding the good name of their organisation.

The overall Commissars were Comrades Khumalo Migwe and Raymond Nkuku. The contingent from Africa embarked at Algiers and at Las Palmas met another ship from Odessa carrying the European contingent.

The Festival in Havana lasted for nine days. In that period the troupe had the great thrill of meeting Fidel and Raoul Castro, as well as ANC President Tambo. They fraternised with the youth of the world. They met well-known writers, poets and painters. They discussed culture and the role that art played in society. But above all they spoke about peace and disarmament. The slogan of the Festival was "Peace, Solidarity and Friendship".

Comrade Ndondo relates their experiences in Cuba:

> "Comrade Lindiwe, now our Chief Representative in Stockholm and herself an eminent poet, explained what all the dances, sketches and songs were about before each performance. This helped greatly to give the audiences a deeper and better appreciation of what we were doing. Through the dramatisation of poetry — for example, the sketch about Nelson Mandela — we were successful in presenting the life and plight of our people in South Africa.
>
> "Whenever we performed, the reception was very good, so that, by the time the Festival ended in Lenin Park in Havana, we had already made up our minds that we had to maintain this cultural group.
>
> "We felt that the 'West' (Angola) should synthesise everything that went on in Cuba. This would demand a great deal of practice, and it was decided that everybody had to become even more versatile. If a comrade was musical, as they all were, a singer had also to learn to dance; a gum-boot dancer also had to learn traditional dancing. This was the only way in which we could succeed if we were to become musical ambassadors for the ANC, which was our great ambition."

When they got back to Africa, the troupe negotiated with the local political leadership and soon received the approval of the NEC in Lusaka to form what is now known as 'Amandla!' — the cultural ensemble of the ANC.

Political Bias

From the outset Amandla adopted a strong political bias in its performances. It set out to urge all audiences that South Africa should be completely isolated. Through the medium of the theatre, the performers were determined to fulfil their role as an integral part of the ANC. At the same time, they never lost sight of the fact that they had to entertain and bring joy to their audiences.

It is perhaps paradoxical that many of these performers, who only a short while before were wielding sticks and stones against bullets, were now employing musical instruments to contribute to the struggle against the enemy. They very sincerely and honestly felt that, since it was ANC policy to muster all its forces to fight against the racists, this was one way in which they could contribute most effectively to that struggle.

The company have travelled far and wide over the years. They have performed in the Nordic countries on two separate occasions — in 1980 and 1983. They have also visited Holland on two occasions and have been to most of the socialist countries. In the USSR they not only performed in the large, main halls, but also played to many factory audiences, where the workers overwhelmed them with enthusiasm and understanding. Amandla even went out to the rural areas, to the great collective farms, where they won the same approval from the farming communities. Young and old, students and workers — all enjoyed Amandla's offerings.

More recently Amandla have broken new ground by attending a Festival for Black Arts in Brazil. This trip to Rio de Janeiro was a real eye-opener for them. They found that many Brazilians saw a parallel between their lives and struggles and those of the blacks in South Africa. In Brazil colour discrimination is more subtle, but most of the poor are black. There is no legislative colour bar, but in most places management reserves the right of admission, so that the 'Copacobana" is exclusively white.

This trip to South America was a real breakthrough for the ANC, which for the first time became known amongst the ordinary folk there. The group have been invited to visit Brazil again.

In the course of its travels, Amandla has received several diplomas and awards. The troupe have had the satisfaction of winning over a group of racists in Brussels to watch their performance and remain to applaud them.

In the Nordic countries they have raised material aid for the ANC school — Somafco in Tanzania — not only by performing to school children but also by lecturing to them from the platform.

They have had their tragedies and pitfalls as well as happier events. Their Director, Comrade Jonas Gwangwa, was involved in a very serious road accident and was lucky to escape with his life. He has been left permanently injured in one leg. Comrade Nondo Khuze tragically lost his wife, who died in childbirth. And there have been other sad occasions. But there have been at least two marriages within the group, and it is rumoured that a couple more are imminent.

Several children of well-known heroes and leaders of the movement have featured prominently in the ensemble since its inception. The daughters of Vuyisile Mini, Duma Nokwe and John Nkadimeng, to name but three, fall into this category.

The group has matured over the years to the level of real professionalism. It has never, though, sacrificed the "indigenous" quality of its performances. The format has remained basically the same, even if the repertoire of songs and the script and choreography have changed to bring them up to date. Comrade Ndondo says:

> "Any collective like ours faces personal problems, of course; but we solve them politically and make sure that we are fully disciplined towards the ANC. We do not think Amandla can be split up as we hear other commercialised groups have been in South Africa. Our morality is the morality of a collective representing the South Africa of the revolutionary people of our country.

Some Problems

> "But because we realise that all black organisations and individuals are at the mercy of the repressive apartheid laws, Amandla feels that it is duty-bound to reflect the real thoughts and yearnings of the oppressed blacks of South Africa.
>
> "That is why we attack the monopolies both within and outside our borders who subjugate our workers so ruthlessly by paying starvation wages and propping up the apartheid regime with vast investments in our country. We also agree with Winnie Mandela, who says that the multi-nationals are political criminals in South Africa. The role they play is simply to defuse a militant situation. So, even if they follow the Sullivan policy of paying the black a salary comparable to that of his white counterpart, that same man goes back to the ghetto where he has no rights and remains a pass-carrying 'Bantu', suffering the demoralisation and confusion of an abnormal existence.
>
> "This is why we call for sanctions, and that is why these big foreign capitalists, as well as the indigenous ones, must get out or be forced out of the stranglehold they possess over our lives. And that is why we do not pussyfoot about this as do our less

fortunate brothers inside the country, or even those who perform externally but have to face up to the apartheid regime on their return. That is the reason for our strong political bias. We feel we are talking on behalf of all South African blacks who, if it were not for the draconian racist laws, would be much more aggressive and militant in their presentation of life in South Africa."

The influence of Comrade Jonas Gwangwa is apparent in may of the musical stints. This is not surprising, since he is easily the most experienced musician in the group. He first appeared in London over 25 years ago with the "King Kong" company, which spawned such a star as Miriam Makeba. He went on to America to participate in making several records and to tour the USA as a trombonist in a band. All the critics acclaim him as a superb performer, "as good as most anywhere in the world."

It is invidious to single out any individual performer, as it is against the spirit of the team-work which goes into the whole performance. Yet there is no doubt that the fervour and originality of the 'gum-boot dance' and the national dance 'Indlamu' are "hits" in the real sense of the word.

Amandla has been criticised for "preaching to the converted", "lack of theatrical cohesion", "coming close to sloganism" and so on. The group readily admit their failures and the reasons for them. They hope that sponsors and tutors will be forthcoming to help them in this respect. They need musical tutelage, literature and production knowhow above everything else. Musical instruments are also at a premium. They say that, if it were not for the ANC logistics, they would not have reached even their present level. So a great deal more is required from ANC sponsors to raise their performances to a much higher level.

Critics' Comments

It may be relevant to quote some of the critics from the national and provincial newspapers and magazines in the UK about their recent performances:

> "It is a sweep of music that expresses an unbroken will, a happy celebration of times that might have been or, hopefully, are yet to come. Exquisite and emotional music weaves throughout the show, stopping only for a recitation of Nelson Mandela's magnificent speech from the dock before the awful sentence that still imprisons his body but not his spirit. Possibly the acting set pieces are naive and sit awkwardly at some moments, but the music sweeps all along on an irresistible wave." (*New Musical Express,* 14/9/85 — Edinburgh.)

> "They create a joyous spectacle, full of rage and passion, that, from the gumboot dance of migrant workers to a peaceful street-scene that turns to violence when broken up by the police, underlines and celebrates the resilience and spirit of black South Africa." (*City Limits,* 13/9/85.)

> "Anyone who dismisses Amandla or underestimates their significance and contribution to the fight against apartheid must surely have been living on another planet for the last few months." (*City Limits*, 13/9/85.)
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> "The elements are diverse — from impeccably drilled dance routines to sober sections of agitprop like Mandela's moving speech from the dock ('I am a black man in a white man's court') in 1964: jazz, rock, traditional music, dance, that ranges from tribal in the famous mineworkers' boot dance, superb acapella singing, blistering tableaux of Soweto life (and death)". (*Guardian*, 12/9/85.)

One of the proudest moments in the lives of the group curiously enough does not in any way concern their musical performances. Their greatest pride and concern was when several members of the ensemble were elected to be delegates to the historic ANC Conference in Zambia last June.

This was the culmination of all their work and dedication to the cause which they serve so well. The Conference recognised, with great acclamation, that they were indeed outstanding ambassadors, not only on behalf of the ANC but also of all suffering people in South Africa.

But finally let us hear from the Director, Comrade Jonas Gwangwa himself, who says: "All the time we aim to create songs of praise for our leaders and for the courage of the fighting people; of comfort for the bereaved and of hope, too, beacuse at last we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. We shall go on performing and singing — all the way back to Pretoria."

Support International Year of Peace,
1986

AFRICA NOTES AND COMMENT

by Ahmed Azad

Burkino Faso: No Easy Road to Social Progress

In August, 1983, Captain Thomas Sankara assumed power following a coup d'etat. From its inception the new regime sought to change the economic and political orientation of the country. Following the independence of Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) from French colonialism, the class confrontation between the pro-bourgeois forces (which include feudal elements, big traders and upper sections of the middle strata) and the progressive forces and trade unions, sharpened. In Upper Volta the trade unions played a significant role in the overthrow of the Lamizana regime in 1980 and in laying the ground for Sankara's accession to power. But the main weakness is that there are 3 trade union federations and the pro-bourgeois forces have an influence in at least one of them.

After coming to power, Sankara worked closely with the trade unions and the Patriotic Democratic League (LIPAD) which is influenced by the science of Marxism-Leninism. In the first year of the revolution leaders of LIPAD were appointed Ministers. Another 'left' organisation is the Union of Communists (ULC), a pro-Maoist body with a strong affection for Albania. The political and ideological differences between LIPAD and ULC were reflected inside and outside the state apparatus. These differences gave the moderates and the right greater opportunities to attempt to halt any deep-going revolutionary changes.

In August, 1984, Sankara dissolved the government and ordered the Ministers to become foremen at certain building sites. At the same time, two Ministers from LIPAD, Arba Diallo (Foreign) and Adama Toure (Information) as well as Soumane Toure, the General-Secretary of LIPAD, were arrested. Since then Diallo has been released but the whereabouts of the latter two is uncertain.

At the end of 1984 and early in 1985 the government introduced austerity measures which reduced the purchasing power of the people and the allowance given to civil servants. On the other hand private owned property was abolished. Eleven trade unions in which LIPAD has a strong influence opposed these measures and accused the National Revolutionary Council (CNR) of jeopardising democratic and trade union freedom. In January and February, 1985, protest demonstrations against the austerity measures were organised by trade unions and school students. Trade unionists, particularly leaders of the teachers' union, were arrested. However, charges against them have now been withdrawn. Hopefully this could lead to unity of the revolutionary forces since polarisation and division between the CNR and LIPAD can only serve the interests of local and foreign reaction and weaken the struggle for a new society.

In August, 1985, Sankara once more dissolved the government and this time sent his ministers to manage collective farms. Only three Ministers, all close to Sankara — Major Lingani and captains Compaore and Zongo — were retained. In justifying this move Sankara said that it was not a result of a crisis but only to show that everybody has to serve the revolution and that no one is infallible. Whatever the reason, frequent changes of government do not augur well for stability and continuity of policy.

Positive Achievements

In two years Sankara and the CNR have recorded some positive achievements. They are making efforts to raise the anti-imperialist consciousness of the masses, have introduced land reform which has drastically reduced feudal exploitation and steps are being taken to devise mechanisms through which the urban and rural masses can become active participants at all levels of decision making. Sankara has also announced bold plans to improve the conditions and status of women. Women are to receive a 'living wage', an amount half of their husbands' salary, and female circumcision is to be abolished. There are women in the army, air force, fire brigades and outriders accompanying Sankara. The government also launched 'Operation Welding' to bring swift aid to drought victims in the north and centre of the country. Towards the end of 1985 it was estimated that some 2.5 million people were suffering from the food crisis.

Since August, 1983, Burkino Faso has improved its relations with Ghana and to a lesser extent with the Ivory Coast. Burkina Faso has a barter agreement as well as close political and ideological affinity with Ghana. But with the Ivory Coast relations are complicated by the fact that foreigners — many from Burkina Faso — are not safe and that the Vieux, the Ivory Coast Secret Service, is known to have contacts with enemies of the Burkinabe revolution. Given that the two governments follow different political and ideological paths, the forces of reaction will always seek to use the Ivory Coast as a base for undermining the Burkinabe revolution. It is therefore important for Sankara to establish good diplomatic relations with the Ivory Coast. Relations between Burkina Faso and the socialist countries are improving and any deepening of these relations would be to the advantage of the revolutionary process in Burkina Faso and the continent.

Quite naturally revolutionaries in Africa follow with close attention developments in Burkina Faso. A successful revolutionary transformation of Burkinabe society would have a profound impact on the revolutionary process unfolding in Africa. But this requires the unity of action of all the revolutionary forces. Any division will be exploited by local and foreign reaction. In the case of the latter, French imperialism is still working to make Burkino Faso dependent once again on neo-colonialism and US imperialism. Its agencies such as the CIA are working to destabilise the country.

SOMALIA: FORMATION OF A NEW PARTY

In October, 1969, a military coup d'etat led by General Mohamed Siad Barre overthrew the reactionary neo-colonial regime. The new regime declared its intention of charting a new path in Somalia. Following the coup, all political parties were banned, including the Somali Democratic Union, a progressive organisation. In the period 1969/1977 a number of progressive changes were made which consolidated national independence, improved the living and working conditions of the people, enhanced the status of workers and propagated socialist ideas. In its foreign policy Somalia pursued an anti-imperialist course, supported the national liberation movements in the developing countries and developed close links and relations with the Soviet

Union and the other socialist countries. These deep-going changes were welcomed and supported by the Somali working people and by anti-imperialist forces throughout the world.

However, from the outset of these progressive changes, class contradictions intensified, taking new forms. Internal reaction and imperialism did not sit back with folded arms. Large landowners, property and commodity speculators, some sections of the big merchants and middle strata remained hostile to radical socio-economic transformation. They worked inside and outside the state apparatus to thwart any radical changes. At the same time certain elements in the armed forces and state structures used their positions to accumulate capital and forge links with foreign monopoly capital, thus paving the way for the development of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. These elements enriched themselves by indulging in land and property speculation, hoarding, profiteering from selling basic commodities on the black market, and corruption. In Somalia some of the reactionary elements forged close cooperation with Saudi Arabia in an attempt to strengthen their positions.

Following the 1969 coup the Somali Socialist Revolutionary Party was created. In the first few years the Party was influenced by the science of Marxism-Leninism and sought to develop the anti-imperialist and class consciousness of the masses. Since all other political parties were banned, the revolutionary forces, including those adhering to Marxist-Leninist positions, joined the SRP and some of them held leading positions in the government and the Party.

"Greater Somalia"

A fundamental weakness politically and ideologically was the imperialist approach within the government and Party towards the issues of what they called "Greater Somalia". This meant that they had designs on territory belonging to Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti. Since this attitude was encouraged, it grew into Somalia chauvinism. Its worst consequences were reflected in the hostile attitude adopted by Barre and others to the Ethiopian revolution. The Somali government refused to recognise that a revolution had taken place and that new opportunities were opened up for strengthening the unity of the anti-imperialist forces in the region. Instead, the Somali government made plans to 'recover their lost territories' and invaded Ethiopia in 1977. This was to be a turning point. US imperialism, together with its reactionary allies in the Middle East, aided and abetted Somalia in its war against Ethiopia. Somalia spurned the efforts of the Soviet Union and Cuba to arrive at a negotiated settlement.

From then on the revolutionary process was first halted and then reversed. Increasingly the progressive and democratic forces, in particular the Marxist-Leninists, were attacked. A number of them were deliberately sent to the front in the war of aggression against Ethiopia and others were removed from their state positions. It is to the credit of the Marxist-Leninists that they came out against Barre's adventurism and called for retaining the links with the Soviet Union. Unfortunately they were not in a powerful enough position.

Given this rupture with progressive policies, the adherents of Marxism-Leninism discussed the necessity of founding a party based on scientific principles. But due to subjective differences, personality clashes and disagreements about the nature and character of the revolution, two parties were formed in 1980, the Communist Party of Somalia and the Somali Working People's Party. One section felt that the experience of Somalia under Barre demonstrated the need for an immediate and radical rupture with the old system and the immediate construction of socialism. The other section felt that the immediate task was the overthrow of the Barre regime and the consummation of the national democratic revolution. The main political differences could be resolved by discussion and debate, but the secondary ones were accentuated, particularly in exile.

These differences also prevented the revolutionary forces from exercising influence on organisations such as the Somali Salvation Front (SSF) which was formed in 1979. The SSF, dominated by merchants and former civil servants with right wing ideas, was influential in the central regions of the country. It launched armed attacks on the Somali army and scored some notable victories. At one point it had about 12,000 men under arms. But the SSF mobilised also along tribal lines and internal bickering reduced its impact. It now has about 3,000 soldiers. Nevertheless the left participated in this Front in order to endeavour to influence it from the inside. In 1981 the Somali National Movement (SNM) was founded. This group was influenced in its formation by the ideas of Moslem fundamentalism and initially sought to separate the north from the rest of the country. At the moment the patriotic and secular forces seem to have gained the upper hand. The SNM has launched armed attacks against the Barre regime and cooperates with the Somali People's Vanguard Party (SPVP).

Unity Conference

The SPVP was formed at a 'Unity Conference' of the Communist Party of Somalia and the Somali Working People's Party in February 1985. This move has the potential of bringing about unity in action of the anti-Barre forces who are Marxist-Leninists. After two years of discussions the overwhelming majority of members of both parties and of their Central Committees voted for unity. The new Party, with its own programme, party statutes and leadership, seeks to become the vanguard of the Somali working class. It believes that at this stage the struggle is between "the ruling comprador class and imperialism" on the one hand and all patriotic and democratic forces on the other. The immediate task is to unite all these forces to overthrow the Barre regime and establish a national democratic government. The SPVP holds that any new government should take effective measures to ensure:

(1) the national independence and sovereignty of the country; (2) the elimination of imperialist influence and domination; (3) the reconstruction of the economy, scientific planning with a dominant state sector, but also encouraging private capital which could play a positive anti-imperialist role; (4) agrarian reform to free the peasants from the onerous burden placed on them and the establishment of cooperatives and state farms and (5) the abolition of repressive and undemocratic laws and institutions and the participation of the masses in the democratic process.

The long term aim of the SPVP is the creation of a socialist society in which there is no exploitation of man by man.

The SPVP has drawn up extensive plans to consolidate its ideological, political and organisational unity on the basis of democratic centralism and cooperation with the international working class movement. Though it is a new party, many of its leaders and activists are not unknown in Somalia. Some members of the Central Committe held leading positions in the SSRP and Barre government. These include Omer Salad Elmi, the General Secretary. During the progressive period of the Barre regime, Elmi was a member of the Central Committe of the SSRP and head of the Orientation Committees. These committees were local mass based bodies through which the people were given the opportunity of participating in political life. Under Elmi these committees operated in a democratic manner, held lively well-attended meetings, diversions and debates and helped to raise the political consciousness of the working people on local and international issues.

S.A. Connection

Unity of all the democratic and patriotic forces is essential, especially at a time when the Somali economy is in dire straits, corruption is rife even in the distribution of aid to famine victims, and the army engages in a fratricidal internal war as well as an external war of aggression which soaks up nearly 50 per cent of the budget. It is widely believed in South Africa that after the racist 'Foreign Minister' Pik Botha visited Somalia in December 1984, an agreement was reached offering South African Airways landing and other rights in Somalia. Over the past few years Somalia has become a base for the aggressive and interventionist US Rapid Deployment Force and participates in US sponsored military exercises. Thus a once proud independent country is becoming increasingly dependent on handouts from US imperialism and Arab reaction.

There is a clear need for the unity in action of all patriotic and democratic anti-Barre forces. This is very difficult to achieve, since in both the SSF and SNM there are powerful right-wing forces whose main social base is tribalism. In fact it was during discussions with some of the right-wing forces that two of Somalia's leading Marxist-Leninists, comrades Aidit and Ikaar, were assassinated.

The SPVP has set itself many lofty aims which accord with the interests of the Somali working people. However, there is still a long road to travel and innumerable obstacles to overcome before it can establish itself as the vanguard of the Somali working class.

Ethiopia: Revolution on a Firm Foundation

1985 was an exceptionally difficult year for Ethiopia. Drought on an unprecedented scale stalked the country with 12 of the 14 provinces affected. Millions were on the brink of death by famine whilst thousands, including many children, died. In these exceptionally trying times US imperialism continued its attempts at destabilising Ethiopia, while the counter-revolutionary separatist groups in Eritrea and Tigre — with the help of Arab reaction and imperialism — attempted to step up their offensive. As aid from the socialist and capitalist world poured into Ethiopia, US imperialism used the sufferng of the Ethiopians to intensify its anti-Soviet, anti-communist campaign. In the mass media of the developed capitalist countries the Ethiopian government, the Workers' Party of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission were portrayed in a bad light. Outright lies and distortions were spread: that aid was abused, that there was corruption, that transport to deliver grain to the needy was withheld in order that it might be used for war purposes.

However unpleasant it may seem to some Western donors, the fact is that the Ethiopian government has a right and a duty to protect its country and citizens from armed aggression. The venom should be directed at the counter-revolutionaries and their backers who exploit this human tragedy in order to weaken the authority of the Ethiopian government.

In eleven years — a very short period in history — the new revolutionary power has extensively restructured the economic basis of the country. Land has been redistributed, state farms are being organised, the banks, insurance companies and large and medium sized industrial enterprises have been nationalised. In the last few years the Ethiopian authorities have paid special attention to improving the agricultural situation. Over the past two years a record crop of coffee, the main export commodity, was gathered and the export of cotton and other farm products was also increased. In 1985 new lands were ploughed and irrigation systems on rivers were initiated. The plan to settle one and a half million people from the drought stricken areas to places more suitable for agricultural self-sufficiency was successfully launched. More than half a million people have already been resettled on new lands in the Western Province. The bourgeois media distort this humane act as "forced removals" and project it in the worst possible light. There is no doubt that for many people resettlement is the best long-term solution. The Ethiopian government, with its limited resources, is doing its best to ensure that the transition is as smooth and painless as possible. Naturally, in operations such as these, mistakes can be made and some in charge may act officiously. This should not detract from the overall need for the operation or from its success.

Mengistu's Speech

An objective assessment shows that the nationwide 'Popular Mobilisation' to fight the effects and consequences of drought has had positive results. These and many other questions were dealt with in a speech by Mengistu Haile Mariam on the occasion of the 11th Anniversary of the Ethiopian revolution. In the speech he called for self-reliance, deprecated any sense of dependence, ordered the extensive use of fertilisers and manure to increase the area of crop farming and the development of fruit and vegetable gardening. Increased cattle breeding was also essential, he said. He reiterated his government's offer of an amnesty to those who would leave the anti-people's camp. Mengistu also reported that work was proceeding on the creation of a Constitution Drafting Commission with the objective of securing the direct participation of the masses in running the country.

In these difficult times the people, government and Party of Ethiopia have not forgotten the struggles of other peoples. It is a test of proletarian internationalism whether, even under the most severe conditions, a people is able and willing to respond to the needs of others. The support rendered by Ethiopia to our struggle in South Africa, to the ANC and SWAPO,is proof that the people of Ethiopia have passed this test.

Ethiopia hosted an International Emergency Conference in Solidarity with the Peoples of South Africa organised by the Afro-Asian People's Organisation (AAPSO) on October 11-13, 1985. President O.R. Tambo, in his speech to the conference, extended heartfelt appreciation and fraternal greetings to the "heroic people of Socialist Ethiopia." He declared:

> "From the very moment of the triumph of the revolution in 1974, Ethiopia has championed the cause of the total liberation of the African continent as part of its commitment to human freedom, social justice and world peace. In this respect she has firmly supported in concrete terms the struggle of the peoples of South Africa and Namibia led by the ANC and SWAPO respectively."

In his speech comrade Mengistu castigated the crimes of the Pretoria terrorists and their aggression against the people of Namibia and the front-line states. He called for the imposition of mandatory economic sanctions, for increased support and assistance to the ANC, SWAPO and their military wings, and to "mount a major campaign to declare 1986 as the year of the anti-apartheid struggle." In calling for a revolutionary transformation of South Africa he said:

> "The wounds of injustice inflicted upon the people of South Africa cannot be healed by reforms. Nor can token measures provide a cure to the plight of the people in the country. The real solution lies in the complete dismantling of the apartheid system and the creation in its place of a new, undivided, democratic South Africa free from racism. These have been the fundamental objectives of the Freedom Charter and action programme which constitute the historic documents of the African National Congress."

At the end of the conference a mass rally attended by over 150,000 people was held in Revolution Square, Addis Ababa. This rally was addressed by a number of speakers including comrades Tambo, Mengistu and Romesh Chandra, President of the World Peace Council. The speeches were punctuated by slogans from the crowd demanding the destruction of apartheid and declaring support for ANC and SWAPO.

Ethiopia's deep commitment to revolutionary transformation and firm internationalist positions has incurred the wrath of imperialism, reactionary Arab countries and local counter-revolutionaries. However, Ethiopia enjoys warm and fraternal relations with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

The Soviet Union has given and continues to give a tremendous amount of assistance not only to the solution of the immediate problems, but in order to find long-term solutions. Soviet air transport has flown innumerable missions taking food, grain, medicines and other goods to the needy, and to transport the people to new areas for resettlement. The imperialists criticise the Ethiopian government for not supplying trucks to transport grain and other food, but the fact is that a Soviet truck fleet of 300 units is engaged in overland relief operations. Any visitor to Ethiopia can see columns of ZIL trucks with Soviet and Ethiopian flags painted on them pounding the dusty roads. The Soviet Union, GDR and Czechoslovakia are providing Ethiopia with modern machines and equipment for agriculture and irrigation systems. Already in 1984 the first machines were produced at the tractor assembly plant in Nazret, and the construction of the Melka Vakana hydroelectric station is going ahead. Our class enemies may froth at the mouth with their anti-Soviet and anti-communist hysteria, but the Ethiopian people, government and Party have on numerous occasions praised highly the assistance of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

The revolution has very firm roots on Ethiopian soil, but there are still many difficult and complex problems to solve. In the face of external and internal counter-revolutionary conspiracies and actions, the struggle of the Ethiopian people to build a new society free from the bondage of imperialism, dependency and the exploitation of man by man deserves the support of all progressive mankind.

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It is the task of all oppressed peoples, whether they be Chinese, Indians or Negroes, to recognise their common class interest and unite together against their common enemy — imperialism.

Albert Nzula, 1931

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WORKERISM AND ECONOMISM

Forms Of Incorporation By The State

By L.N. Mahlalela

The history of the working class movement is full of examples of "theorists" who accept the leading role of the working class in the struggle against capitalism, but reject all forms of revolutionary discipline. 'Workerists' not only reject the ANC and the S.A. Communist Party but believe in a "pure working class politics" which is the special concern of wage earners and excludes all others. Apart from the illusory nature of "pure" politics (which doesn't exist anywhere) the implication is that for the workerists, politics is concerned only with work and wages and that all other struggles are "populist". In this respect, workerism is a variant of reformism. Despite opposing intentions — both are forms of economism which in the long run may bring improvements in wages, work conditions and greater union recognition but do not threaten capitalist relations of production. They leave the profit system intact.

There are many variants of incorporation, one of which I described in *"Dramatic Growth of the Democratic Trade Union Movement"* (*The African Gommunist*, Second Quarter 1985). In that article, the bureaucratic paralysis of white trade unions was seen to flow from the state's reorganisation of industrial relations through the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924. The relevance of that Act in so far as it constitutes the genesis of the present industrial relations system is obvious, and the consequences of the Act are a lesson to the whole of the democratic trade union movement. It has also been a lesson for the state who saw the bureaucratic incorporation of the whites as most beneficial to capital. The state now sees the potential similarly to cripple the militant black working class as even more beneficial. It would therefore be inadmissable for the contemporary trade union movement to ignore the risks to their militancy which flow from the conception of a 'worker organisation' separate from the Liberation Movement and the Communist Party, and based on and confined to the shop floor. It is simply another form of incorporation.

Incorporation of the first type

Since Wiehahn an increasingly defiant trade union movement has emerged that is not easily diverted or receptive to workerist notions, although the latter are frequently proclaimed to be *in defence* of the independence of the trade unions and the workers' integrity. However, trade unionists must be on their guard at a time when the regime has taken a calculated risk to undermine the privileged position of the white labour aristocracy and include nearly all wage workers (agricultural and domestic workers excepted) in a single national system of industrial conciliation. The *registered* trade unions already exceed 12% of the total work force of 10,000,000. There are 194 registered trade unions and 46 unregistered ones: the democratic movement, however, has approximately a million members, 45% of them independent of any federation and 7% and 9% respectively affiliated to FOSATU and CUSA. Therefore until unity is achieved, no single federation can speak in the name of all.

Strikes — as many as 87, involving 68,000 workers between January and March of 1985 — have characterised the new industrial relations system since 1979. Unlike the white workers, whose strike activity virtually ground to a halt after 1924, the number of black workers using the strike weapon has demonstrated their refusal to be incorporated. However, it must be remembered that the dispute-settlement system lends itself to conciliation rather than militant confrontation and that monopoly capital is more adequately equipped than smaller firms to bide its time and await the effects of an industrial relations system that is *structured* to divert union activity from the shop floor to the board room.

What separates the 'Wiehahn' legislation from the earlier I.C. Act is that it has emerged in the context of an entrenched white labour aristocracy (substantially created by the Act's equation of skill with race) and the fact that the industrial relations laws — allegedly aimed to de-racialise the industrial conciliation system — exist within the framework of racially discriminating labour regulation (pass laws, influx control, labour bureaux etc) that cannot be isolated from the overall context in which industrial disputes arise. The political and the economic imperatives — inflation, taxation, the high cost of transport, housing, food, all the controlling labour laws plus the absence of democratic rights which make local and central government *unaccountable* — all these combine to give a totally different dimension to industrial disputes involving black workers. Their conflicts on the shop floor are heavily conditioned by the struggles for democratic rights: try as they might, it is impossible, without flying in the face of reality, to separate economic and political struggles. But their impact can be arrested.

Comparisons therefore with earlier legislation, separated by sixty years and set in a different context, are invidious. Yet one must be wary of the pitfalls of a system *designed* to dilute class conflicts. As it is, an increasing use of the industrial conciliation system is being made by the democratic trade unions. In the first four months of 1985, application for 91 conciliation boards had been made compared with 66 for the same period in 1984. Unions are also using the industrial courts more: 202 cases had been referred to them between January and May 1985 compared with 113 during the first five months of the previous year. (In 1980 only 15 cases were brought before the industrial courts and 30 in 1981. However, the number rose to just under 400 for the whole of 1984). Unions are increasingly testing the industrial conciliation machinery: in 1980 only 23 applications were made for conciliation boards; in 1984 there were 279 — over twelve times as many. Strikes too were settled more speedily — although there were notable exceptions. Of the 87 strikes in the first quarter of 1985, 50% were settled after 24 hours and 80% in less than three days. This does not add up to incorporation — absorption of labour struggles by management. Nor does it suggest that the *only* methods of struggle were those confined to the formal machinery. Some strikes were legal; there were boycotts and protests and confrontations with the employers and the police. The shop floor structures were in many instances reportedly strengthened and many unions had grown in numbers and in quality eg CCAWUSA with a membership in excess of 35,000 and the NUM currently at 110,000. The strength and independence of the democratic unions are undoubtedly their greatest guarantee against incorporation.

Incorporation of the second type

There is much ambiguity about the concepts *"worker independence"* and the various notions of *"an independent worker organisation"*, *"worker control"*, *"worker identity"*. *"Worker independence"* can mean many different things, from an independent organisation of workers "to win the country and take all the powers from the government", to a shop steward-based movement extending its concerns to the "communities". Behind this is the idea that such an organisation would ensure that the workers play a leading part in the struggle for change and dictate the terms of change.

An organisational example of this was the assumption of responsibility by shop stewards' councils for taking up social issues in local areas. "Direct democracy" was practised because the shop stewards were directly accountable to the shop floor. As one observer put it: the shop stewards' council would bring together different factories from different industries and provide "a focus for workers as a *class* around issues beyond the factory in that area."

Another commentator, Rob Lambert, saw it as a unique original structure with council action committees being concerned with worker education and the state of organisation in the factories: a structure which "enables the trade union movement to transcend a narrow economistic factory bound orientation". It would transform consciousness so that workers "can feel that they can seriously debate strategies of resistance around the more directly political issue of influx control." (*The Changing Labour Market of the Seventies and State Strategies of Reform*, 1983; p.64).

The practical inspiration for this conception of 'worker democracy' was the shop steward council which opposed the demolition of shacks by the East Rand Administration Board in Katlehong township. This committee was seen as a forerunner of a *'shop steward movement'* and grew to encompass the establishment of shop stewards' combined committees with shop steward representatives from some of the monopoly firms, notably in the metal industry. The committees gave their members mutual support, exchanged information and formulated common objectives. The movement was praised for its involvement of the rank and file in decision making and firmly establishing the principles of accountability and 'workers' control'.

The achievements of the new militant trade unions — in winning wage demands, improved conditions and union recognition — and the success of the shop stewards' council's interventions in Kathlehong township, encouraged the notion that what was being created was "the embryo" of a "working class politics" in South Africa. (*Webster, Organisational Trends*, 1983 p.34).

> "Among its more advanced leadership (Webster writes) there is a growing awareness that worker control cannot simply mean control over one's organisation or limitation by workers of managerial autonomy; *workers' control is beginning to be felt by some to mean that workers must play a part in running the state*". (Emphasis added.)

However, the elevation of shop floor democracy to all levels of workers' participation showed serious limitations when the issues involved were not strictly those of the shop floor. Violation of shop floor democracy and the principle of accountability were given as the reasons for non-participation in the wider political movement, eg the UDF. Lewis, the GWU General Secretary, explained that trade unions had a task of *representation of their workers inside their organisations* and constantly ensuring that they were mandated for every decision. The political leaders on the other hand had the lifetime political task of "appealing to the masses *out there.*" (There were other, technical and political reasons for not affiliating to the UDF — but it is the *economistic* arguments that concern us here.

This economistic view was not taken by all the democratic trade unions. CUSA, for instance, (correctly) pledged itself "to use all forces and all efforts to work towards a common citizenship." (*South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 9.2. p.87). Equally pertinently, the leaders of MGWUSA realistically noted (*SALB* Vol 9. No.2 pp 68/9) "that a trade union was not a political party" but an organisation of workers uniting to fight for the rights of workers and to defend these rights on the shop floor. In addition to this, trade unions were committed "to fighting for a society in which all workers are free." However, the MGWUSA leadership noted that as it was very difficult for trade unions to launch and control political campaigns in addition to functioning efficiently "in the first line of defence of the workers", the trade unions had to "find the most effective way of being part of the struggle for freedom and justice".

The sophisticated political stance of Sydney Mufamadi (GAWU) provided the sharpest answer to Lewis and others who wished to restrict the political participation of trade unions to occasions when it could be controlled on the shop floor. Mufamadi stated: "Some want to perceive the working class as only found on the factory floor. Our view is that even those people who are not behind machines ... can be said to be waging a working class struggle if the issues they take up in their various sites of struggle ... serve to undermine the class relations upon which the present society is built."

The attempts to separate the trade union from thepolitical struggles led by the liberation movement are not innocent. If there were not a hidden agenda behind these statements — made with increasing frequency since Foster's 1982 "Principles" — they might be dismissed as unworthy of further attention, especially when, as we have seen, the very nature of industrial disputes plainly illustrated their linkage with the struggles against national oppression.

What then is the content of this 'hidden agenda?' *First,* the assumption that the workers' interests against capital and for social emancipation have nothing to do with the concerns of the South African Communist Party. The

Communist Party is either ignored in the references to a 'worker organisation' or written off, as historically having directed itself to the peripheral enemy: that of racial domination rather than the exploitative system of capital itself. The Communist Party is condemned for being part of the wider "populist" struggle waged by the ANC (and UDF).

Second, the assumption that the so-called "populist" struggle (no less than the war of liberation being waged by the ANC/SACP) is in some way separate from workers' struggles and ultimately likely to be hostile to the interests of the workers; that the workers' struggle is against capitalist relations of production and *not* national oppression, and that in the event of 'populist' victory the working class would need a separate organisation based on trade union principles of shop floor democracy to safeguard its true interests.

Third, the assumption that the workers' voice that will emerge from their independent organisation would be against capitalist relations of production and for the common ownership of the country's wealth. The workers — credited with a socialist consciousness — would direct the political victors in the coming struggle towards that path: indeed the revolution itself would be predictably proletarian when it came.

Central Thrust

The separation of the content of 'working class politics' (which is unspecified) from the wider political struggle, and the tendency either to rewrite South Africa's historical past or begin again de novo, is the central thrust of 'workerist' thinking. Treating the democractic trade union movement *possessively*, and perceiving its developing structures and growinng membership as malleable, brand new and formally independent, the workerists 'write off' the on-going liberation struggle and deny the workers their historical identity. They ignore political traditions established by the ANC/SACP over the major part of South Africa's industrial history. Webster (*Black Trade Unions in South Africa*, 1983), ambivalent but not accepting Foster's "Principles", acknowledges this tendency and cautions:

> "Above all, the South African working class is not some collective tabula rasa waiting for the correct line — it contains its own traditions, political culture and consciousness which has to be confronted in any strategy to develop a working class politics".

Having acknowledged that working class political tradition is rooted in the African National Congress, Webster notes that this involves for many workers a "conditional and qualified support" for the national political tradition. For him, an "embryo of working class politics is being created" —

within (but independently of) the wider struggle and based on the ambiguous conception of workers' control. The conception of a "working class politics" is derived — in the case of Foster as well as the expelled members of the Marxist Tendency of the ANC — by separating the phenomena of race and class.

Webster, in searching for the specific conditions of South African capitalism, notes the substantial intervention of the state between capital and labour, resulting in a *racially* divided workforce. This, he says, had given the class struggle a racial form. The merging of race with class, the economic with the political, has blurred the consciousness of many: "a challenge to the foreman is not ... expressed as a challenge to capital" but a challenge to the white man. Hence, he says, "they" see the logic of the conception of "colonialism of a special type" but argue that change within capitalism, the collapse of the pre-capitalist mode and transition to monopoly capital have led to increasing intellectual dissatisfaction with the analysis that a special type of colonialism exists in South Africa.

Webster sees Foster's statement of principles in 1982 as registering this dissatisfaction and a recognition that the embryo of "working class politics" is to be found in the resistance to the attempts of the capitalists to absorb the workers' struggles through the Wiehahn reforms. But to what extent is this type of thinking correct? Is an attack on racism not also an assault upon capitalism? Have the changes within capitalism and the collapse of the subsistence economy in the bantustans made the national struggle superfluous? What are the implications of a "worker organisation"?

It has already been argued (see the article already referred to in A.C. 2nd Quarter, 1985, *The Dramatic Growth of the Democratic Trade Union Movement* pp. 55 and 57) that the structural changes to capital that have occurred since the seventies, led to a re-ordering of the (racial) division of labour in which the Wiehahn legislation gave the appearance of "de-racialising" the industrial relations system and freeing it from overtly coercive practices. This however did not remove the presence of racial discrimination generally in the labour market. Statutory restrictions concerning access to productive land, pass laws, influx control, labour bureaux, urban areas regulations — all the racially oppressive mechanisms that illustrate the cost-paring and repressive character of capitalist social relations in South Africa — operate side by side with the post-Wiehahn legislation, and shape many of the current (mutually reinforcing) trade union and political struggles.

The collapse of subsistence agriculture (the demise of "pre-capitalist modes") far from freeing the labour market of racial restriction, has intensified it and led to bureaucratic labour controls (and racially discriminatory constitutional "restructuring") that serve capital more generously than the Bantustan structures, and sustain existing capitalist relations. Industrial decentralisation, federalism and the latest regional structures are examples of this racially discriminating restructuring.

Finally, there is Webster's point concerning the creation of an embryo of working-class politics, found in the workers' resistance to incorporation by the post-Wiehahn labour legislation. While the workers have consciously resisted the State's design to reduce their active participation at the level of the shop floor, it has already been noted that structurally the conciliation machinery is designed to undermine worker militancy. Monopoly capital is better equipped than smaller capitals to await its time (assisted by market conditions favourable to it) to benefit from the effects of the co-opting legislation. It is the force of the political struggles associated with our national revolution that has enabled our working class to resist the combination of the market effects of unemployment and the co-opting tendencies of the Wiehahn labour legislation. Few of the trade unions in Western Europe have been able to demonstrate such militancy in recent times. While the independence of the trade unions has frequently been demonstrated — and South Africa's workers have good reason to exhibit considerable pride in this respect — it is far too early to assess the longer-term effects of the Wiehahn structures. It is also not clear how the establishment of a worker organisation — geared to shop-floor principles and practices — could guarantee trade union independence any more than the existing unions. But this is to anticipate the arguments of Foster.

Foster's statement of "Principles" (an address to a FOSATU congress, entitled "The Workers' struggle — where does FOSTAU stand?") was delivered in 1982, three years after the formation of FOSATU. Since then it has had considerable media coverage and publication in pamphlet form. The statement is frequently referred to and to some extent prepared the way for the development of a cautious floating of ideas rather than any practical action — although it read at the time like a statement of intent. The general question of a "worker identity" and a "worker organisation" continues to permeate the trade union literature, and the matter is bound to surface more directly as the struggle intensifies and trade union leaders feel the pressures of their members to identify more closely with the struggle being waged by the ANC-SACP alliance.

Foster's overview of the development of the political and trade union struggles in South Africa set the context for his analysis. The complex questions he asked were appropriate and significant: did the leaders know what direction the trade union movement was taking? What guidance should be given to the workers; what organisational strategies; what were the dangers to worker militancy that lay ahead once they had achieved recognition and stability? Finally, what role were they to play in the wider political arena? The answers this inquiry generated provided an ideological framework for the projection of a worker organisation that would express "a working class politics" whose interests were seen as distinct from those of the "wider" movement, meaning the ANC-SACP-SACTU alliance.

An Historical Account

Foster conceptualised the working class and defined its place in relation to what might be broadly defined as the liberation struggle. His is the most explicit statement of a "worker movement" so far, although the precise content of a "working class politics" and the nature of a "worker organisation", is left notably vague and impressionistic. However, the conclusions he reached, which set the scenario for his workerist ideas, emerge from an historical interpretation of the South African struggle that is *designed* to produce an historical account of the liberation organisations and the SACP which renders them irrelevant to the workers' movement, as defined. This crude treatment would hardly merit a response but for the fact that it incorporates the thrust of some of the current critics of our movement.

Foster's thinking encompasses the working class as a whole, not simply the FOSATU membership. If it were the latter, he acknowledges, "we would have a very limited role". "Working-class politics" and a "working-class movement" are characterised by more than strikes and protests. He sees working-class movements, everywhere in the world, as large-scale organisations with a clear social and political identity. In these terms, he concludes, there was no South African working-class movement; it had no self identity — although it was growing and it was potentially powerful. But size is not enough for workers to control their own destiny — he believes workers must build a powerful and effective movement against some very hostile forces and ensure that such a movement is able to take a clear political direction.

The hostile forces (in South Africa) are unspecified but "non-worker" movements are implied, i.e. the ANC and its allies in the fifties. The Communist Party is missing from his history. Foster is not referring to a specific national trade union federation. His image is one of a large scale organisation, exclusively working class in membership that is as much concerned with work and wages as with interventions at the political level. Up to now, no such movement had emerged. Clearly, for Foster, there had been a class struggle without a working class movement. Since the latter is only defined by its special self-identity — its collective sense of its exploitation and its unity — it is a matter of debate for the intellectuals whether it exists or if so, when it might have been born! This is a subjective notion of class which gives rise to the sort of mystique about the special qualities and culture of the working class. The worker movement is conceived as democratic (shop-floor based) and the working class assumed to have a single political mind (quite apart from the collective mind of the non-worker movement) and to share the same broad consciousness of the need and direction of social change.

Our critics evidently find it difficult to conceptualise the links between the economic and the political struggle. The latter is seen to be pertinent to the 'worker movement' but, they say, alliances with the 'wider movement' run the risk of the workers' cause being 'hi jacked'. The ANC and SACP not being exclusively worker movements in their structures or in terms of their membership do not qualify in workerist terms to be entrusted with the workers' interests. There is also a second ground on which they do not qualify. Since historically they had chosen racial discrimination as the target of their attack on the State, they had failed to confront the real enemy: capital. As a result, according to Foster et al, there developed a tradition of "popular" or "populist" politics as opposed to a working-class politics. The ANC and the Congress Movement mobilised the masses against the oppressive minority regime in order to challenge the legitimacy of the state, but — our critics allege — they did not create a working-class movement as such. Instead the ANC rose to become one of the great liberation movements in Africa — political but not working class *as such.*

Race and Class

The separation of the economic and the political; race and class, and the treatment of these as separate "systems", underline the theoretical errors of workerism. The circumstances in which capital combined with the state to structure the labour market, in order to increase its rate of exploitation (by adopting labour-controlling measures and declaring pass-bearing employees to be ineligible for skilled occupations) have already been noted. The effects of job reservation and racially discriminatory practices in industry have characterised the apartheid capitalist labour system. They have also been crucial to the division of labour and consequently the rate of profit. It is in this way that capital uses apartheid to increase its rate of exploitation.

The ingredient of *race* has been a substantial element in the cost-cutting practices of the employers. Under the specific conditions of S.A. capitalism, racial discrimination is essential for the reproduction of the customarily high rate of accumulation. Race, therefore, has to be recognised as one of the arenas of class struggle — whether that conflict is waged in the sphere of economics or politics. The view, therefore, that the ANC and SACP have failed to confront the substantive enemy of the working class as a result of their generalised assaults on the system of racial discrimination, can hardly disqualify them as defenders of the workers' true interests. The challenge to the *minority* regime and the legitimacy of the state is at the same time confrontation with capital. More particularly, the political goals of the ANC-Communist Party for the seizure of state power, the dismantling of the apparatuses of the apartheid capitalist state, and the common ownership of the landed estates and the monopolist industries — all these would constitute most signficant advances for the working class. Yet, the workerist analysis marginalises our movement in its relationship to the workers and calls our struggle "populist".

Effectively "worker organisation" means the establishment, before it is too late, of a trade union-structured body of workers — a type of shop stewards' federation — to guard the workers against the ANC-SACP-SACTU alliance. There is the clearest recognition by our critics that the workers totally identify with the national liberation movement. They are therefore exhorted to build their own organisation even when they are part of the wider struggle. The organisational base envisaged is that of a structure based on shop floor accountability: not anything "opportunistic" or "adventuristic" they caution. The 'workerist' organisation will provide a strong base for an educated and informed membership. Without this, they say, the working class would have to "surrender leadership of the community to other strata in society". There would be involvement in community affairs but from an organisational base to avoid being "swamped by the powerful tradition of popular politics."

The autonomy of the workers' organisation is its hallmark. The nearest model to this form of structure is the syndicalist movement in Europe before and immediately after the First World War. Its task was to defend the workers' immediate interests and to work towards the ultimate emancipation of the proletariat — although the only consciousness they had was that which they acquired on the shop floor: there was much rhetoric but little scientific socialism. In effect, the major part of their activities centred on reform in the work place.

The object of creating a worker-based organisation in the South African context is apparently to protect and project the workers' interests and to enable them to use their muscle as workers to prevent the SACP or other liberation organisations from "hijacking" the struggle and "turning against the workers". But as the projected worker organisation has no programme (collectively or on its own) for the social emancipation of the whole of society (*which is the purpose and objective goal of the Communist Party*) there seems little doubt that if anyone is to do the hi-jacking, it will *not* be the ANC/SACP — but workerism iself: by falling into the trap of capitalist incorporation, by limiting the struggle for liberation and economic emancipation to the politics of the shop floor.

DEATH OF ALEX LA GUMA —

Writer and Freedom Fighter

by Z. Nkosi

The death of Alex La Guma, prominent writer and political activist, has deprived the South African liberation movement of one of its best-known and best-loved figures. He died in hospital in Havana on October 11, 1985, after a heart attack. He was 60 years old.

Born in Cape Town in 1925, Alex La Guma was the son of Jimmy La Guma, one of the pioneers of the liberation movement and a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of South Africa prior to its dissolution in 1950.

After completing his education at Trafalgar High and Cape Technical College, Alex La Guma worked as a clerk, book-keeper and factory-hand before entering the service of the movement full-time. As a young man Alex joined the Communist Party and was a member of the Cape Town District Committee of the Party until it was banned. He maintained his political activity in the succeeding years, taking a foremost part in the preparations of the historic 1955 Congress of the People where the Freedom Charter was adopted setting out the perspectives of the Congress Alliance headed by the African National Congress.

The 1950s witnessed a sustained assault on the Coloured people by the Nationalist regime, which sought to eliminate their franchise rights and segregate them in all spheres of life under the provisions of the Population Registration and Group Areas Acts. Thousands of Coloured men and women were rounded up and subjected to sordid classification procedures. One woman described her ordeal at the hands of a reclassification officer in the Transvaal:

> "He looked at my profile from the right side, then from the left. Then he examined my hair and he has a fine comb there which he runs through the heads of some. He touched my nose and asked what my mother's looked like".

She was reclassified African. As vice-chairman of the South African Coloured People's Organisation, Alex La Guma was in the forefront of the people's resistance to these barbarities. Speaking at a protest meeting in the Cape Town Banqueting Hall in August 1955, he said:

> "We do not object to being called Africans. But we realise that when the goverment classify us as Africans, they subject us to all the life-destroying burdens of the African people. If we all unite under the banner of the Congresses, we cannot lose the struggle for freedom and democracy. We have the strength of millions on our side, not only in South Africa but outside. The Freedom Charter is going to be the basis of the new South Africa and the future belongs to us".

In November of that year Alex took over the position of chairman of SACPO, and in that capacity led the campaign against the introduction of apartheid on the Cape Town bus system. (SACPO was later renamed the South African Coloured People's Congress.)

On December 5, 1956, Alex La Guma was one of the 156 men and women of all races who were rounded up by the police all over the country and flown by military plane to Johannesburg to stand trial on a charge of treason — the prosecutor arguing that the democratic rights set forth in the Freedom Charter were of such a radical nature that the organisers must have envisaged the overthrow of the government by violence as the only means of bringing them about. It took nearly five years of legal argument and political struggle before the charges were thrown out by the court and the accused enabled to return to their normal lives.

Life for the political activist and the rebel in South Africa, however, is never normal. One night in 1958 Alex was the target of an assassination attempt when two bullets were fired through the window of the room in his home while he sat working at his desk. One bullet missed, the other grazed his neck. The would-be assassin was never traced, but a few days later Alex received an anonymous letter through the post reading: "Sorry we missed you. Will call again. The patriots".

The treason trial was not yet over before the country was plunged into further turmoil following the massacres at Sharpeville and Langa on March 21, 1960 and the declaration of a state of emergency by the Nationalist regime. Ruling by decree, the government arrested 20,000 people throughout the county. Some dubbed "idlers" and "tsotsis" were hastily processed by kangaroo courts held secretly in the jails and shanghaied to forced labour in remote districts. Over 2000 of the top political leaders of the people were detained in prison without trial for periods up to five months. Among them was Alex La Guma. He spent the weary months of incarceration reading and writing, preparing himself for the career on which he was later to be launched with such success.

Alex had been a voracious reader all his life and from an early age he had tried his hand at writing. His first professional efforts, however, were as a member of the staff of the progressive newspaper *New Age*, whose staff he joined in 1956 and whose pages he illuminated with cartoons, news reports, stories and many striking vignettes of life and tragedy among the population of Cape Town.

Series of Arrests

All the while he continued with his political work and was no whit discouraged by the persecution to which he was subjected by the racists. In 1959 he was arrested with Ronald Segal and J. Morolong for entering Nyanga township without a permit with pamphlets calling for an economic boycott of apartheid firms and institutions. In 1961, when Nelson Mandela, as spokesman of the National Action Committee of the Maritzburg All-In African Conference, called for a three-day strike at the end of May in protest at the inauguration of the Verwoerd Republic, Alex La Guma and his colleagues in the Coloured People's Congress threw themselves into the campaign but were arrested and held for 12 days without bail under a new law specially passed by the regime to deal with the threat posed by the strike call. Although their leaders were in jail or in hiding during the crucial period before the strike was due to start, the Coloured people responded magnificently and Cape Town industry and commerce suffered heavily during the three days of the strike. Alex was punished for his role in the campaign. In July 1961 he was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act and in September charged under the Act for organising an illegal strike, but the charges were later withdrawn. In December 1961 he was ordered to resign from the Coloured People's Congress.

That same month, however, the people's patience ran out and on December 16 a series of bomb explosions directed against government buildings and installations in various parts of the country heralded the appearance of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the liberation movement. The regime's response was the notorious General Laws Amendment Act of 1962, the so-called Sabotage Act, providing inter alia for the placing of government opponents under house arrest. In December 1962 Alex La Guma was served with a notice confining him to his home for 24 hours a day. The only visitors permitted him for the five years of his notice were his mother, his parents-in-law and a doctor and lawyer who had not been named or banned.

The fact that he was living under 24-hour house arrest, and thus completely cut off from all possibility of political action, did not save Alex La Guma from still further victimisation at the hands of the regime. Following the passing of the 90-day no-trial Act in 1963, Alex was one of those arrested and detained without trial. In prison he was held in solitary confinement, locked in his cell alone for 23½ hours a day, the remaining half-hour being allowed for "exercise" — also on his own. As was the case with other detainees, he was denied visitors and any reading or writing material, refused access to his legal adviser and generally subjected to the most abominable form of mental torture so that he might be forced to answer questions to the satisfaction of the police. His wife Blanche, a nursing midwife, was also detained,and their two children, Eugene and Bartholomew, had to be cared for by relatives. Blanche La Guma was later released, but almost immediately served with a banning order. And in due course Alex was also released, but on bail, facing a charge of being in possession of banned literature — another charge which came to nothing.

In 1966 Alex La Guma was detained again. By this time the repression was so intense that on release he and Blanche were forced to leave the country with their two children. They first settled in London, where they played a large part in the consolidation of the ANC presence in the United Kingdom. Later they moved to Havana when Alex was appointed chief representative of the ANC in Cuba. Under the supervision of Alex and Blanche hundreds of South African students were able to acquire the education in various fields which was denied them at home.

During the years of exile Alex devoted as much time as possible to his writing, and also involved himself in the affairs of the Afro-Asian Writers' Association. At the time of his death he had been secretary of the Association for several years and in 1969 was a winner of the Association's Lotus Prize for Literature.

It was with the publication of his novel *A Walk in the Night* in 1962 that Alex La Guma's talents as a writer were first revealed to a wider audience. Bearing in mind the atmosphere of fear and prejudice which prevailed in business circles in South Africa at the time, it is hardly surprising that he failed to find a local publisher brave enough to launch him. Besides, he was banned and could not be quoted. So his first novel was brought out by Mbari Publications in Nigeria. It was instantly acclaimed, circulated world-wide and translated into several languages.

District 6

It is a short novel — barely 90 pages long. But in its pages teem the variegated types of Cape Town's District Six — the bar flies, the louts and touts, the workers and their wives, the prostitutes and pimps, the skollies, who constituted the most colourful community in Cape Town. District Six is no more, its buildingss bulldozed and its population dispersed in terms of the Group Areas Act, but nobody who ever passed through District Six could ever forget its winding, crowded streets, its jostling humanity, its smells, its poverty and wretchedness, its vivacity and infinite variety. For all its outward degradation, the pulse of life beat strongly in its veins — so strongly that to this day the regime's attempts to convert it into a "white" area have been frustrated by the resistance of the whole community, black and white alike. The resentment of the people of District Six against their dispossession by the racists is being expressed today in the all-out struggle of the youth of the Western Cape against the regime and its police and military forces.

Alex La Guma knew District Six intimately, having lived there, in No. 2 Roger Street, for most of his early life before moving to the suburb of Garlandale. He knew and understood the people and their problems, their "troubles", as they called them, and he wrote of them with intimacy and care. These are not cardboard charcters strutting lifelessly through his pages, but real, live flesh and blood men and women who, though weighed down by the neglect and insult of the world, yet proclaim insistently their determination to survive, to eat, drink and make love, to endure the night of loneliness and terror and welcome the cleansing dawn of tomorrow.

It is the very completeness of his knowledge and understanding of his milieu which gives Alex La Guma's prose its incisive bite. He does not strain for effect but etches his cameos of working class and lumpen life with artistry and precision. You can feel the grime on the tenement walls, smell the mounds of rubbish in the back lanes, hear the bursts of laughter from the corner pub, see the swift flash of the knife drawn in the heat of a quarrel. It is as dramatic and vivid as if it were taking place before your very eyes.

Part of the secret of Alex La Guma's success is the fidelity of his dialogue to the living speech of the people. The words burst from the page with startling realism, crackling like newly printed banknotes. He has the knack of creating a character from his speech, the language of one subtly differentiating it from another. These are real people talking — terse, racy, humorous, and convincing as truth.

As a person banned under the Suppression of Communism Act, nothing Alex La Guma said or wrote could be published or reproduced in any way. The General Laws Amendment Act of 1962, better known as the Sabotage Act, now part of the Internal Security Act, makes it an offence, without the consent of the Minister of Justice or except for the purposes of any proceedings in a court of law, to record or reproduce by mechanical or other means or print, publish or disseminate any speech, utterance, writing or statement or any extract from or recording or reproduction of any speech, utterance, writing or statement made or produced or purporting to have been made or produced anywhere at any time by any person banned under the Suppression of Communism Act from attending gatherings. Nothing Alex wrote was ever able to circulate in South Africa except illegally. His name, and that of his wife Blanche, remained on the banned list indefinitely.

As though to make assurance doubly sure, the censors seized copies of *A Walk in the Night* as they entered the country by post in January 1963, declaring that they found the book "objectionable". But the quality of Alex' writing overcame the efforts of the censors to suppress it, and his work over the years has won widespread recognition both at home and abroad. *A Walk in the Night* was followed by *And a Threefold Cord* (1964), this time dealing with life in one of the shanty towns on the periphery of Cape Town. Here are housed the tens of thousands of blacks for whom there is no "official" place to live, Coloureds and Africans clutching precariously to life on the outskirts of the cities which offer their only hope of subsistence. Many of the inhabitants are in the urban area illegally, lacking the papers which establish their right to existence, a prey to perpetual police raids, insecurity and poverty. Home for them is a crazily-constructed shack providing only the barest shelter from the elements.

There are no paved streets, sanitation, drainage or electric light in the areas; water has to be brought by the canful. In the Cape winter, when the rain comes pouring down, the roofs leak and the whole neighbourhood becomes sodden and waterlogged. Over all hovers the smell of dirt and wretchedness. Children play in the mud, and men and women flounder in the dark going to and from work — if they are lucky enough to have work.

These are areas where life is short and cheap, where violence flares out of hate and frustration, yet where humanity, love and hope sprout even from the dunghill of evil and decay.

And a Threefold Cord is drenched in the wet and misery of the Cape winter, whose grey and dreary tones Alex La Guma has captured in a series of graphic prose-etchings. It could have been depressing, this picture of South Africa's lower depths, with its incidents of sordid brutality and infinite desolation. But Alex La Guma's compassion and fidelity to life infuse it with a basic optimism. His electric dialogue flashes with the lighting of the human spirit. His massage is: "People can't stand up to the world alone, they got to be together."

His next novel was *The Stone Country* (1967), a story of bleak walls, dark corridors and clanging doors distilled from his prison experiences; followed by *In the Fog of the Seasons' End* (1972), recounting the danger and daring of work in the underground, and *Time of the Butcherbird* (1979), dealing with the people's resistance to the threat of forced removal to a bantustan. In addition to writing many short stories, Alex La Guma also edited *Apartheid,* a collection of writings on South African racism by South Africans, and after extensive travels in the Soviet Union, *A Soviet Journey* in 1978. He wrote many other pieces besides, and was busy on a new work at the time of his death.

It was the mixture of realism and optimism which was the hallmark of Alex La Guma's work. He faced life squarely and did not try to hide its nastiness for those at the bottom of the tip, but always retained his confidence that working together, the oppressed people could transform their world, end the nighmare of capitalism, exploitation, racism and prejudice and build a new world based on rationality and co-operation. But he was not a preacher. He was essentially a story-teller with a sharp eye for detail and a warm sense of humour. There was no malice in him.

His Optimism

In one of the first pieces he wrote for the newspaper *New Age* (August 30, 1956), Alex looked at the plight of the Coloured people of Cape Town.

> "There is a story told among the old people which says that one day, many years ago, God summoned White Man and Coloured Man and placed two boxes before them. One box was very big and the other small. God then turned to Coloured Man and told him to choose one of the boxes. Coloured Man immediately chose the bigger and left the other to White Man. When he opened his box, Coloured man found a pick and shovel inside it; White Man found gold in his box.
>
> "The people have many explanations for their lot. Some of these take the form of folk tales, superstitions and myths; others are downright logical. But in all there is

> the common consciousness that oppression, suffering and hardship are facts of life. And they have learned to temper hardship with humour, and to sweeten the bitter pill of their drab lives with the honey of a satirical philosophy. But always they have been aware of pain. . . .
>
> "The census declares that we are almost one and a quarter million. But if you identify a people, not by names and the colour of their skin, but by hardship and joy, pleasure and suffering, cherished hopes and broken dreams, the grinding monotony of toil without gain, despair and starvation, illiteracy, tuberculosis and malnutrition, laughter and vice, ignorance, genius, superstition, ageless wisdom and undying confidence, love and hatred, then you will have to give up counting. People are like identical books with only different dust-jackets. The title and the text are the same.
>
> "And since man is only human, he must rise in the morning, throw off the blanket of night and look at the sun".

On May 23 last year (1985), by decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Alex La Guma was awarded the Order of the Friendship of the Peoples. Presenting the order in the Kremlin in Moscow, B.A. Ashimov, Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, said the award had been made in tribute to the literary and political work done by Alex La Guma in the promotion of friendship among the peoples of Africa, Asia and other countries and in the cause of world peace.

In reply, Comrade La Guma said that he received this distinguished tribute in all humility, recalling that the Soviet Union in 1985 was remembering the millions of lives lost during the Great Patriotic War which had ended 40 years earlier when Nazism, racism and Hitlerite terror had been defeated. Today the peoples of Africa, Asia and the Americas were engaged in a similar struggle against the forces of fascism, racism and oppression, he said. African and Asian writers had done much to promote friendship and understanding among peoples and men of letters, and would not stand idly by while the forces of reaction and war tried to push mankind towards a nuclear cataclysm. "No effort must be spared to save our planet from obliteration", he said.

A few months later our comrade was no more, but his life and work will not be forgotten. The following message was cabled to Blanche La Guma on October 14:

> "The Central Committee and all members of the South African Communist Party send heartfelt condolences to you and the family on the sad loss of Alex. He devoted his life to the fight for the liberation of the South African people and the advance to socialism, contributing not only through his writings, but also in his everyday political work inside South Africa and after being forced to leave the country. Alex was in every sense a worthy ambassador of our people, a staunch supporter of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, an internationalist and fighter for peace, a lovely human being, friend and comrade who will be deeply missed by all who knew him. The SACP dips it red banner in honour of this loyal and dedicated son of the people."

BOOK REVIEWS

FEDERALISM PROVIDES NO ANSWER TO APARTHEID

Federalism and the Future of South Africa, by Murray Forsyth (South African Institute of International Affairs, November 1984.)

Written by a British academic who has recently visited South Africa, this work seeks to analyse the contribution which federalism might make to resolving South Africa's problems. Forsyth acknowledges that historically federalist ideas have not enjoyed much support in South Africa. The idea of a federal union was first mooted between 1850 and 1890 by British governor-generals as a means of cementing the empire through Anglo-Boer unity. Federalist ideas were again floated at the time of Union but Smuts and Merriman won the day with the argument that a federal constitution would merely deepen divisions among the whites.

Forsyth argues that since 1910 federalist ideas have become increasingly influential in South African politics. They have made an impact on the United Party and its successor, the New Republic Party, and in a rather more liberal form upon the Progressive Party and later the PFP. Federalist ideas are sometimes associated with the now fashionable concept of 'consociational democracy' which was developed by the Dutch political scientist Arend Lijphart and which currently underpins much of the constitutional thinking of Inkatha and the PFP. Yet, as Forsyth notes, Lijphart's 'consociationalism' does not even presuppose one person/one vote on a common roll and as a concept is hopelessly incoherent and ambiguous.

Federalism, Forsyth insists, must start from the premise that in South Africa there is one economy and that a federal state would have to be founded on a common nationality in which each 'ethnic group' has equal rights. There would be a central legislature in which one house would be elected on the basis of numbers alone and another elected or appointed by the groups as groups; each house would ideally have equal weight. In this way, group rights would be properly balanced against individual rights and the principle of partnership and equality would be secured. The plea by M.T. Steyn (a former president of the Orange Free State) in 1909 for equality between English and Afrikaner through a federal constitution would now be realised for all ethnic groups in South Africa.

The federalist argument is one which deserves our attention. As the popular onslaught against apartheid intensifies, federalist ideas of one kind or another are likely to be propagated from every quarter of ruling class opinion. Whatever the intention of those who propagate them, the effect of federalist ideas in the South African context can only be to sabotage the democratic revolution as envisaged in the Freedom Charter and entrench the basis of white supremacy and multi-national capital while making it appear that the legalistic crudities of apartheid are a thing of the past. Forsyth's pamphlet (despite his plea for equality and participation) makes plain why this is so.

In his introduction Forsyth quotes approvingly N.J. Rhoodie's comment that the country is 'escaping from the sterile debate which traditionally revolved around the question of whether people were for or against apartheid'. Far better, Forsyth suggests, that we follow the 'more constructive path' of working out a political order feasible for South African conditions. The reader can only feel a sense of unease. In what way and for whom is the debate for or against apartheid a 'sterile' one?

S.A. Imperialism

This unease deepens as Forsyth proceeds to argue that Verwoerd's bantustan policy began to change 'the imperial nature of the South African state' and that in Botha's new constitution 'the imperial idea has now been tempered by the federal idea'. A 'sea-change' has taken place in which although 'the old imperial guarantees embodied in apartheid legislation are still in force', Coloureds and Indians at least enjoy citizenship and political rights and it is now possible for these groups to have a 'much clearer political profile'. Why the Coloureds and Indians should reveal this clearer political profile through a well-nigh total boycott of the new constitution is not something Mr Forsyth pauses to consider.

True, he wants federation through a common South African nationality, but how are we to get there? Since he regards South Africa as 'an evolving federal state' in which 'gradual change is not to be despised', it appears that we begin 'constructively' with the existing structures of apartheid in the hope that something better will 'evolve' in their place. The homelands should as 'a long term objective' become viable provinces (where they don't 'positively reject the idea') and the ethnic groups whose rights are to be protected are characterised in the familiar apartheid way as *tribal* groupings — Zulus, Tswana, Xhosa, etc. Forsyth simply ignores the analysis of the national groups as presented in the Freedom Charter. Writing a 'constructive' pamphlet which avoids 'sterile debate' appears to require the assumption that the ANC and the Charter simply don't exist!

Forsyth does admit that, whatever the progress made towards the federal idea in conservative and reactionary circles, the blacks are less enthusiastic. In fact, the UDF has recently affirmed that among all sections of democratic opinion in South Africa, there is 'an unshakeable conviction in the creation of a non-racial unitary state in South Africa, unpolluted by racial or ethnic considerations as formulated in bantustan policy'. And why? Precisely because any flirtation with the federal idea in the South African situation means of necessity working within the divisive 'ethnic' structures which are central to apartheid. The federal idea invariably sows dangerous illusions about the government's 'reform' strategy as some kind of step in the right direction. Not only does Forsyth's pamphlet bear this out, but it also explains the particular appeal of federalism to large capital.

Role of Big Business

In what is perhaps the most revealing passage in the entire pamphlet, Forsyth argues that a unitary state would be in danger of replacing the domination of one group by another. He adds that, given the fact that in South Africa 'huge economic differences' tend to reinforce ethnic ones,

> 'a policy simply of extending the suffrage would be likely to be accompanied by such radical demands that the survival of South Africa's economy, unique in Africa, and offering the only real hope for the economic betterment of the southern part of the continent, might be totally dislocated'.

In other words, a unitary state would mean radical socio-economic change! Under the guise of protecting the group rights of whites, the federal scheme would constitutionally entrench the power of domestic and international monopoly capital and enable it to continue unhindered in its exploitation and to paralyse any government which sought to introduce the kind of investment and social policies necessary to tackle the daunting problems of poverty, unemployment and urban and rural squalor which afflict the people of South Africa. Precisely because, as Forsyth says, economic differences reinforce ethnic differences in South Africa, a federal set-up would leave the basic foundations of the apartheid system intact. At best, it would perpetuate in social and economic terms what is at present enshrined in law.

Perhaps the debate for or against apartheid is not so sterile after all. Certainly the rights of national groups should be fully protected and the Freedom Charter makes this point crystal clear. But unless these rights are protected within a unitary state, able to carry through a thorough-going democratic revolution, it is difficult to see how any meaningful break with apartheid can take place at all.

DIALEGO

SOUTH AFRICA'S IMPERIALIST ROLE IN AFRICA

The Policy of the Republic of South Africa in Africa by A.Y. Urnov. (Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 1982).

The author, an eminent Soviet scholar, deals with the history of the racist Republic's foreign policy in Africa from the Act of Union in 1910 up to 1981. His aim is to trace the evolution of this policy and the forms and methods of the regime's actions. The result is a carefully thought out periodisation of South Africa's policy in Africa.

The first part of the book is divided into three stages — from 1910 to 1945; then on to the mid 50's and from then to the beginning of the 1960's. The raison d'etre for this periodisation is that South Africa's history and that of its foreign policy in Africa is part of universal history and therefore governed by the objective laws of historical development. Each of the above phases coincide with the first, second and third crisis of capitalism. During the first phase British capital had an unchallenged hold on the South African economy and on the political course the country was to follow, thus preventing South Africa from "acting in the international arena as a serious independent force" (p 9).

On the one hand the British held that South Africa was their ally, albeit unequal, in stemming the tide of the African liberation movements and thus tightening the colonial grip on the African peoples. On the other hand, the British did not trust the South Africans well enough for them to be given their own 'lebensraum' on the African continent. (Anglo-Boer contradictions had led to two Anglo-Boer wars). This being the case, the British thought it necessary first and foremost to "strengthen her control on the Dominion itself — her most precious and at the same time least trustworthy possession in the region." (p 11).

The British maintained that strengthening the Union of South Africa would compromise British interests inside South Africa and beyond its borders. This is why Britain resisted South African attempts to annex the protectorates of Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland, as well as Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (pp12-17). But, in order to allay South African suspicions about British intentions and to strengthen her own position in South Africa itself, Britain facilitated the handover of the former German colony of South West Africa to the Union.

With the coming to power of the Nationalist Party in South Africa in 1948, and the advent of Afrikaner capital thereafter, the South African ruling class sought to redress the situation of their dependence on Britain.They wanted a fair share of the 'colonial pie'.

African Charter

That is why in March, 1945, when the Nationalist Party was still in opposition, their leader Malan put forward a suggestion, embodied in the so-called 'African Charter', to all states having territories and interests in Africa to coordinate their activities. The main aim of the Charter was to preserve the continent for 'Western Christian civilisation'. This marked a turning point in white politics in South Africa — a point characterised by the realisation, on the part of the whites, of their community of interests in the face of the rising liberation struggles both in South Africa and elsewhere on the African continent. That is why today we can hardly speak of any effective white opposition party. The only effective opposition is offered by the forces of the national liberation movement led by the African National Congress.

Small wonder, therefore, that one of the avowed aims of the 'African Charter' was 'suppression of communism' both at home and abroad. In 1950 the Communist Party of South Africa was outlawed , ushering in a new era marked by a growing tendency by the ruling class towards fascism and, in resistance to that, an intensification of the liberation struggle.

The Strijdom government somersaulted. In a speech in 1955, Strijdom stated his government's intention "to extend a hand of friendship" to the newly emerging independent African governments. Emphasis was laid on 'economic aid' to the countries of Africa. There was even talk of establishing diplomatic relations between these countries and South Africa (pp 27-28). The racist rulers of South Africa were at pains to convince our African brothers that they (white South Africans) are also Africans. All this was done with the aim not only of legitimising the apartheid regime, but also to create the conditions for the economic and political subjugation of the liberated states, "imposing on them the South African model of development." (p 28)

In fact the racists had begun to realise that no amount of open hostility or political and economic blackmail could stop the decolonisation of Africa.

Unholy Alliance

The second part of the book deals with South African foreign policy from 1960-1981, starting with the first half of the 1960's when the decolonisation of Tropical Africa was completed. This left only Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Rhodesia and South Africa under colonial and racist rule. This was the period of the 'unholy alliance' between the Portuguese colonialists, Smith's Rhodesia and the so-called Republic of South Africa (after 1961).

The period 1974-1981 is heralded by the April 1974 anti-fascist revolution in Portugal which paved the way for the independence of the Portuguese colonies and the demise of the 'unholy alliance'. In 1980 Zimbabwe was born as a sovereign, independent state, thus leaving South Africa as the last bastion of racism and colonialism in Africa.

The formation of the OAU coupled with the growing international isolation of South Africa forces the racists to resort to the policy of 'cordon sanitare', aimed at containing the liberation movement in South Africa and other countries in the region. By the mid-60's the South African economy had reached a stage of state monopoly capitalism and since South Africa's internal market had been exhausted it began to look for a market in neighbouring countries. Hence the so-called outward-looking policy of Vorster which the author states did "on the whole facilitate the weakening of the unity of African states and the development of collaborationist tendencies into a rather influential current within the OAU" (p 126).

After the downfall of the Portuguese colonial Empire and the demise of the unholy alliance, Vorster pursued the policy of dialogue, at the same time rapidly fostering South Africa's military capability. Two years after the revolution in Portugal South Africa's military budget doubled to reach one billion rands.

The author analyses at length South Africa's involvement in Angola and Rhodesia; scrutinises the racist regime's policy in Namibia and gives much attention to Botha's total strategy.

Throughout the book the author emphasises the aggressive imperialist foreign policy of South Africa, comparing its reactionary role on the African continent with that of zionist Israel in the Middle East.

The book is based on an extensive study of literature, including documents and other material of the South African Communist Party, African National Congress and works of leading members of the national liberation movement of South Africa. The author shows there is an inextricable, dialectical link between the foreign and domestic policy of any state and is an impressive contribution to Marxist historiography. For those actively involved in the struggle against the racist-colonial regime this book is a must. Let us hope it will be translated into English.

L.C.M.

A PORTRAIT OF TWO WOMEN VICTIMS OF APARTHEID

Call Me Woman by Ellen Kuzwayo (London: The Women's Press, 1985) and **Winnie Mandela: Mother of a Nation** by Nancy Harrison (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd. 1985)

Here are two women, both of whom have seen the inside of jail because of their opposition to the regime, united in their detestation of apartheid, who yet have very different approaches to politics and the tasks of liberation.

Ellen Kuzwayo's account of her life contains some interesting information about the experiences of black women in South Africa during the course of her long life, enriched by experiences in the urban townships and the rural areas of our country. She describes the tactics of women who survived in the townships by illegally brewing and selling alcohol to carry on their trade under constant police harassment. She also portrays the grim struggle for survival of women in destitute bantustans who battle to overcome disease and hunger afflicting their children because of drought, lack of sanitation and water supply, and the absence of the men who have become migrant labourers.

Although she describes vividly the oppressive conditions facing her countrywomen, her analysis of the system under which they live does not go beneath surface manifestations such as law and morality to the social relations underlying them. For example, she writes:

> "Just stop and think where South Africa should be today in terms of demonstrating to the international scene the realities of different racial groups living as one nation in one country, if the early rulers of this country had not become greedy, mean and both selfish and self-centred and started on the discriminatory legislation which has left the whole country in a state of total fear and mistrust, with a future 'too ghastly to contemplate' to quote one-time Prime Minister J B Vorster, one of the greatest advocates of the evil system of apartheid." (p9)

She attributes crime in the townships to the destruction by apartheid laws of the traditional values of black culture. One is left with the impression that if only the colonialist, racist rulers of South Africa would stop being greedy, and if only the oppressed people would regain lost values, all the misery created by the apartheid system would vanish overnight.

Kuzwayo explains the 1976 Soweto uprising exclusively in terms of the issue which triggered it — the imposition of Afrikaans as medium of instruction in schools. From her account, this was the only problem with Bantu Education:

> "Suddenly, (the students) found themselves going to school day after day and returning home bored, frustrated, having learned nothing. Their only chance of an education had been cruelly snatched from them." (p41)

Kuzwayo explains why June 16 is a day of mourning for our people:

> "Our hearts still bleed for our boys and girls who lost their lives, who were tormented and tortured in detention, who disappeared without trace, who have become wanderers and beggars in foreign countries . . ." (my emphasis, p44).

She describes Steve Biko as "above all a leader and soldier of great courage" (p46), but by implication includes in the ranks of the "wanderers and beggars in foreign countries" those brave young people who left their country to join the people's army Umkhonto we Sizwe. No word in her book of "soldiers of great courage" like Solomon Mahlangu, who left home for military training and returned to fight for the liberation of our country.

Forms of Struggle

Nevertheless, Kuzwayo concludes with an avowal that her commitment is to "struggle to liberate ourselves and to bring about peace and justice for all in a country we love so deeply" (p263). However, her conception of struggling for liberation equates running Girl Guide sessions, acting in a film of *Cry the Beloved Country,* and organising a women's group *A re Godiseng Chelete, Basadi* (Let us invest money, women) with active participation in the liberation movement. She refers to the time when she participated in the Youth League of the ANC in the forties, but allocates a scant paragraph to this in contrast to glowing pages describing her activity in a youth programme under the then Non-European Affairs Department. And all that remains for Kuzwayo from her Youth League experience are memories of the "glamorous Nelson Mandela", "hardy, down-to-earth" Walter Sisulu, with Oliver Tambo's "middle-of-the-road" clothes acting as a balance between them. She then comments:

> "I wish I could explain why there seemed to be no outstanding women in the ranks of the ANC movement at that time. If they were present, for some reason or another I missed them. I heard of Ida Mtwana but I did not meet her to work with her." (p139)

She then comments:

> "Those of us who knew Albertina Sisulu in the 1940s never thought that some day we would see and experience the Albertina of the 1960s and 1980s. I knew her then as the smiling and pleasant wife of Walter Sisulu, a kind hostess who served the committee members of the Congress with tea after long and intense meetings. Who would have thought then that in 1983 we would be talking about her as someone who has endured the longest banning order amounting to 17 years?" (p245)

Certainly Kuzwayo woud not have thought so, since despite her professed championing of the equal ability of women, she is puzzled by Winnie Mandela, whom she met when both were training as social workers, because Winnie Mandela "unconsciously drifted" from "social work practice to social change involvement" (p246).

Ellen Kuzwayo would perhaps appreciate how Winnie Mandela progressed if she read one of Winnie's comments in the biography by Nancy Harrison:

> ". . . The government seems to think that by imprisoning our leaders, banning our organisations and smashing our strikes they can stem the tide of history. No one has ever been able to do that -. . . I found that the regime's ploy of creating a buffer pseudo-middle class of blacks through the Urban Foundation and like organisations is regarded by the very people who benefit from it as a monumental fraud. The fight for our country is a fight all the way and it is no longer a matter of any consequence to me where I fight from. The fascist government seems to think that by forcing the front-line states into denying the ANC any support they will halt the forces of change. But the people inside this country are as determined as ever to claim their rights. Through all these years I have never had any doubts that the day will come when Nelson will come out to lead our people with my brother, Oliver Tambo." (p166).

Even as seen in Nancy Harrison's sentimental biography, the character of Winnie Mandela stands out. If one can ignore the abundance of fatuous phrases that permeate this book, Winnie Mandela emerges as a strong, courageous freedom fighter. This is thanks to Winnie Mandela, not to Nancy Harrison who calls the Freedom Charter "a moderate document; by any standards" (p40) and describes President Oliver Tambo as "this clever lawyer who was in partnership with Nelson Mandela". (p49)

Winnie Mandela participated in the women's anti-pass demonstration in Johannesburg in 1958 and was arrested with 1,200 others, losing her job as a result. She was never able to enjoy normal family life. Nelson Mandela was an accused in the Treason Trial, either detained, banned or required by the work of the struggle to be away from home. After being acquitted in the Treason Trial, Nelson Mandela went underground and he and Winnie were able to meet only in secret. Winnie was under constant police surveillance. To get through a police roadblock after her last meeting with her husband, she had to pretend to be in advanced labour. Shortly afterwards Nelson Mandela was captured by the police — the date was 5 August 1962.

Life of Harassment

With Nelson Mandela sentenced, first to five years' and then life imprisonment in two successive trials, Winnie Mandela's life of untold harassment began. She was subjected first to banning and then to banishment and continuously persecuted by the security police. Repeatedly she was arrested and tried for breaking her banning order. On 12 May 1969 Winnie was detained and held for 491 days — 17 months. For the first 200 days she had no contact with anyone outside the prison. She was interrogated for five days and nights continuously, standing under a brilliant light. Eventually she was brought to trial and accused of receiving instructions from her husband to carry out ANC work. When she was acquitted, she and the other accused were immediately redetained. In a second trial in September 1970, she was once again acquitted.

Winnie was banned again and began to be subjected to a series of vigilante attacks. Her dog was killed with poisoned meat. One night she woke to find three men in her room, one holding a wire noose in his hand as he advanced towards the bed. She commented on these attacks:

> "It is quite extraordinary how efficient the police are when they are investigating other crimes, but no culprit has ever been brought to account for any of the offences against me or my property — bombing, housebreaking, attempts at shooting, strangling and stabbing me, damage to my house and possessions — all these have baffled the police . . ." (p124)

In 1974, Winnie was sent to prison for breaking her banning order. She had taken her children to put them in a car driven by another banned person, Peter Magubane, so that they could get a lift home in the rain. In court, when she was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment, her daughter Zinzi burst into tears. Winnie turned furiously on Zinzi, saying: "You will never cry in front of a white policeman again!" (p126)

Winnie was again detained in the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto uprising, to be released in January 1977. Four months later she was banished to the Free State town of Brandfort.

Recently Winnie Mandela has unbanished and unbanned herself in defiance of the regime. She has returned to Soweto after her Brandfort home was attacked. She has held press conferences and given interviews to the media to denounce the state of emergency, call for the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and for economic sanctions against apartheid South Africa.

Mosadi wa Sechaba

THE UGLY REALITY OF APARTHEID

Torture is part of the system: State violence in South Africa and Namibia. (African National Congress, London. Price 50p).

This well-documented pamphlet is a timely addition to publications exposing all the ugly realities of apartheid and the Pretoria regime. When it was published in September, 1984 there had been 60 deaths in detention. The figure since then has increased and there is no accurate information of the numbers who have died while in the custody of the security police. All of them were arrested for alleged political offences. This total excludes those who have been killed on the streets and also those who have disappeared and are feared murdered at the hands of death squads. A further pamphlet is needed to expose these new crimes.

This pamphlet does not make pleasant reading, but it is a "must" for those who want to know the facts and figures of police brutality and torture, and the details of the inhumanity of those who maintain apartheid, both in Namibia and in South Africa. It outlines the psychological effects of solitary confinement as well as of third-degree brutal torture — deprivation of food and water, enforced prolonged standing, arduous physical exercise, deliberate suffocation, electric shocks.

B.S.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE "TWO-STAGE THEORY" AND THE BALANCE OF FORCES

From Langa Mzansi, Maputo

Dear Editor,

Cde Nyawuza, in his article on "new Marxist tendencies and the battle of ideas in SA" (*AC* No 103), gets into rather a tangle in his discussion of the "two-stage theory" and the relation between the struggle for national liberation and the struggle for socialism. While I wholly applaud the purpose of his article. I think that some of its points need correction.

Cde Nyawuza remarks that "The problem with people advocating 'socialism now' is that they expect those Blacks who cannot read or write to run socialist industries and mines."

Not only is this remark unfortunately worded, so that it could be interpreted in support of those who argue that "the Africans are not ready for independence", but it is incorrect theoretically. In fact, the very next quotation by Lenin, on the possibility of bypassing the capitalist stage, actually contradicts cde N's point, though he seems to think it supports it.

What is at the heart of this quotation? It is Lenin's frequently repeated observation that it is the balance of class forces, both nationally and internationally, that determines the concrete possibilities of social change —

and not merely the technical level of the forces of production. Of course, the cultural level of the working people will influence the chances of building socialism, but cde N will recall that the overwhelming majority of the peoples of the infant Soviet state were illiterate — a higher rate than in some African countries.

If cde N had referred to the relative weakness of the working class in many African countries, especially in terms of organisation and leadership, he would have been nearer the mark. But even this, Lenin is arguing in the quoted passage, must not be seen as an *insuperable* obstacle. In his long-standing polemic with the Mensheviks, Lenin tirelessly contested the abstract and ahistorical application of Marx's ideas, especially with regard to the connections between the bourgeois democratic and socialist revolutions. He rejected the idea that backward Russia could not construct a socialist order.

Does this mean that the ultra-leftists are right in calling for a socialist revolution rather than a national democratic revolution in SA? Not at all. On this cde N is a hundred times right. If the ultra-leftists had their way, the result would be to wreck not only the coming democratic revolution, but the chances of socialism as well.

But even correct Marxist-Leninist positions must be clearly understood and carefully explained. The "two-stage theory" is a short-hand way of stating two points. The first is that we must distinguish between the concept of a national democratic revolution, which puts power into the hands of a previously oppressed nation or colonised people, and a socialist revolution, which puts power into the hands of the class-conscious proletariat, for the purpose of constructing socialism.

The second point is that, in the concrete case of SA, we consider the national democratic revolution to be the *main task* of the oppressed people, including the workers.

We do *not* mean by this that we must first have our democratic revolution and only later, when that is "over", will we begin the struggle for socialism. The ultra-leftists always try to distort the "two-stage theory" as if this is what it is supposed to mean. (The phrase, of course, does not appear as such in the programme of the South African Communist Party *The Road to South African Freedom.*)

Lenin put it much better when he said that in Czarist Russia the workers had "two tasks" — to fight for democracy together with all the classes that would benefit from this; and to fight for socialism together with the poorest peasants and rural workers.

This brings me to the last point I want to make. Cde N says that "these people who are against the two-stage theory seem to see national and class struggle taking place 'co-terminously' and by implication so interlinked that it is difficult to differentiate the one from the other." But in fact he is giving the workerists too much credit. What the workerists do is to set the national struggle *against* the class struggle, and to see the one as excluding the other. This is a recipe for disaster, which would be fatal to the chances of winning socialism.

As Marx and Engels showed in their analyses of the 1848 revolutions, and Lenin in his analysis of 1905 and in the April Theses, there is, in Lenin's words, "no Chinese wall" that separates the democratic from the socialist revolution. What is decisive is the balance of class forces. It is this balance that decides whether the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism are "co-terminous", overlapping or quite distinct in terms of time.

The analysis of the SACP that SA shows a special type of colonialism is based on a painstaking examination of the concrete realities of our country in the light of practical experience and Marxist-Leninist theory. This examination places the national democratic revolution, in cde N's words, in the centre of the agenda. The correctness of this analysis is being confirmed every day by the achievements of the people of our country on the field of battle.

IMPRESSIONS OF A DELEGATE TO THE 12TH FESTIVAL OF YOUTH AND STUDENTS

From Rosita, Maputo

Dear Editor,

The Festival was a great experience, one that has left an indelible imprint on my heart and mind. It was wonderful to see Moscow in a festive mood, so excited, warm and young. With wide opened arms she welcomed the thousands of young people to marvel at her ageless beauty, herculean strength and undaunted courage. Adorned in the bright colours of the Festival gear, she sang and danced with the young. Together with us she trembled with anger and seethed with hatred at the forces of militarism and reaction, aggression and violence. For did not Moscow witness the horrors of war? Does she not still bear the ugly scars of that war?

The Festival brought together 20,000 young men and women from more than 150 countries, a mixture of nations, countries, continents. Young people of different political views and persuasions, believers and non-believers, from different social strata spoke out against imperialism, colonialism, racism, zionism and apartheid. A colourful, multilingual display of the impassioned enthusiasm of the young to make this world a better one, this holiday of solidarity of the world's young people was a powerful manifestation of their predilection for justice and honesty, their energetic determination to fight for lasting peace on earth.

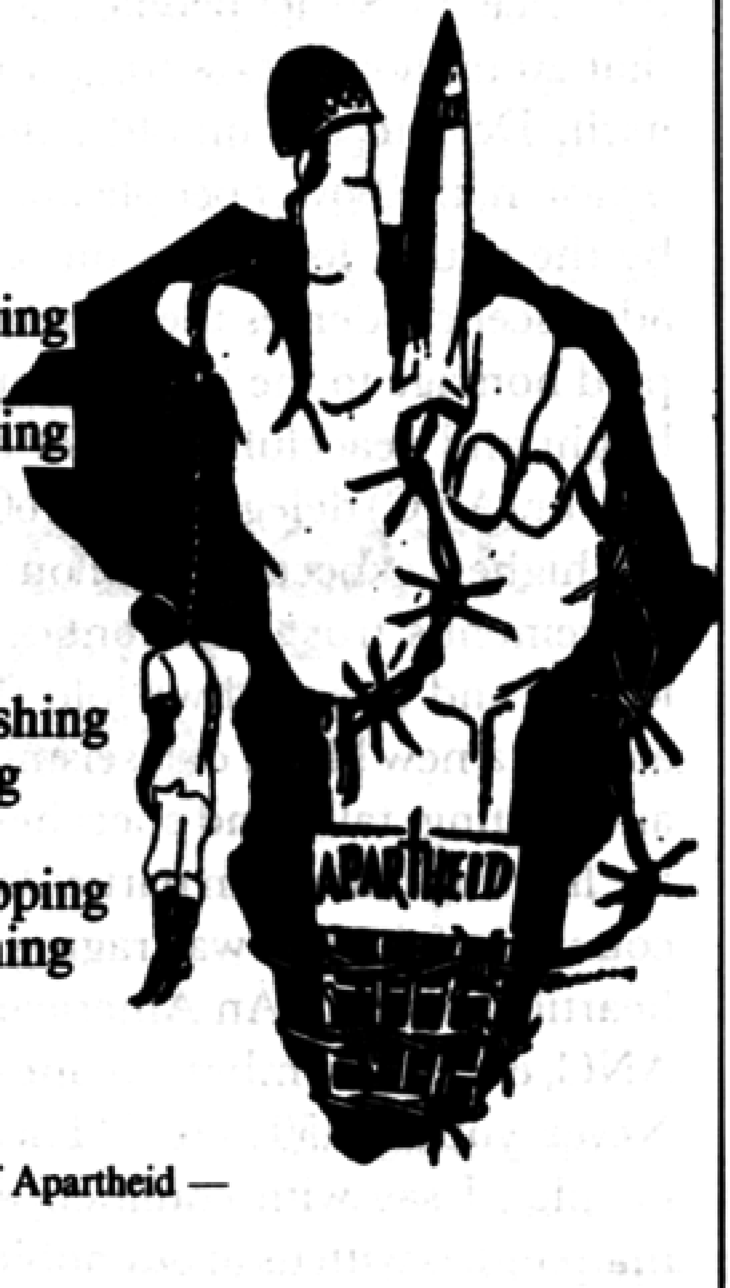
The 12th Festival of Youth and Students took place on the blood-drenched soil where, 40 years ago, the heroic Soviet people smashed Hitler-fascism to smithereens. We learned of the trials and tribulations, the pain and sorrow, the price the Soviet people had to pay for their freedom and independence, that 20 million lives were lost in defence of the motherland, socialism, life itself. Despite the untold sufferings and hardships brought by the Nazi invasion, the Soviet people fought valiantly. The brunt of the war was borne by the youth, for war is most cruel to the young. It ruins childhood and adolescence, denies the young a future. The thousands of young delegates paid homage to the Soviet people who fought and died to make our earth a bright and peaceful home for all people.

Our (ANC) delegation of 160 militant young men and women lived up to the highest expectations of our people and organisation. They justified the movement's trust and confidence in them. At meetings and discussions, formal and informal we told the youth of the world about our bitter fight against a new blend of fascism in South Africa. In song and dance, painting and writing, talks and speeches we told of the fierce battles being fought by the fighting masses, in particular the death defying youth and students of our country, of the just war raging in South Africa. Wherever we went we were heartily received. An American delegate on hearing that we were 150 and ANC, excitedly embraced one of us and exclaimed "Oh man, you ain't 150. Never, you are 450 here!" (The American delegation consisted of 300 young people). I say with confidence that the youth of the world, the spring of mankind, is with us in our noble fight to rid the world of the scourge of racism and apartheid.

The Festival was a magnificent school for all of us. Apart from the personal discoveries made, the intellectual and spiritual push we recevied, our eyes were opened. We saw for ourselves the wide range of opportunities given to the younger generation in a socialist society. We left that proud homeland of Lenin with confidence in the future, knowing that there is something better, purer than the poverty, squalor, disease and hopelessness so common in the western world. The Festival slogans "For Anti-Imperialist Solidarity! Peace! and Progress!" found a genuine place in the hearts of so many of us. The delegates to the 12th Festival of Youth and Students will forever remember the warmth and hospitality so lavishly showered on us by the youth and people of the Soviet Union!

In Detention

He fell from the ninth floor
He hanged himself
He slipped on a piece of soap while washing
He hanged himself
He slipped on a piece of soap while washing
He fell from the ninth floor
He hanged himself while washing
He slipped from the ninth floor
He hung from the ninth floor
He slipped from the ninth floor while washing
He fell from a piece of soap while slipping
He hung from the ninth floor
He washed from the ninth floor while slipping
He hung from a piece of soap while washing



Christopher van Wyk

Dedicated to all those who have died as a direct result of Apartheid — a number we cannot even come close to estimating.

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Shortwave 31mb, 9595 KHz	9.30-10.00 p.m. Daily

Radio Tanzania

Shortwave 31mb, 9750 KHz	8.15 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday 6.15 a.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

The above are South African times